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AUTHOR Edwards, Pat
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ABSTRACT

Intended for primary teachers this booklet contains many hints for enriching classroom activities. It includes 100 ways to "publish" student writing and art work by using student created books, newspapers, magazines, letters, plays, notice boards, assembly reports, art and craft work, tape recordings, writing clubs, and "buy-a-book" days. Also presented are 50 practical ways to promote an interest in reading, ideas to use in planning the year, suggestions for classroom organization, ideas to help develop oral skills, ideas for creative writing, practical math exercises, practical social studies exercises, practical science activities, ideas for teaching art, a description of a year-long art project, ways to use ten minutes, ideas for using music and for easy excursions, activities for special days, suggestions for author of the month and for special projects, ideas for National Aboriginal Week, a section on Christmas in the classroom, bits of information to share with the class, facts about Australian explorers, and information on the history of the months and the naming of Australian places. (EL)

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HEY, THAT'S A GOOD IDEA!

Useful hints for busy teachers

by

Pat Edwards

Illustrated by Dorothy Dunphy

PETA

Primary English Teaching Association

CS208 760

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Hey, that's a good idea! brings together, in one place, a wealth of information originally prepared by former PETA president, Pat Edwards, for earlier PETA publications, including the teachers' *DateBook/Diaries*—now, of course, out of print.

In a convenient new format this information is now made freshly available to the thousands of teachers who have since become PETA members. This book will also be welcomed by those who had always hoped for just such a handy compilation. All teachers will find it an invaluable source of inspiration for those stimulating ideas which make the best classrooms such lively and interesting centres of learning.

The numerous illustrations and decorations have been especially drawn for this new edition by Dorothy Dunphy.

Walter McVitty
Editor

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100 WAYS
to Publish Children's Writing

PUBLICATION IS BASIC TO WRITING

The most important influence on any writer is the audience. *Adults usually only write for a reader or audience—that is, when there is a prospect of 'publication'. Children need this stimulus too; otherwise, they are being asked to write for exercise purposes only—which means, for a communication non-event.*

Given an audience through publication, children can be shown that real writing begins only after the first draft has been written: in the polishing and redrafting that at length produces writing fit for publication . . . *'There's no such thing as good writing—only good rewriting.'*

A YEAR-LONG SERIES OF PUPIL-MADE CLASS BOOKS

The Idea . . . Here's a relatively simple way to achieve regular, strongly motivated publication of all the children's work. Each week (or fortnight) each child contributes his or her best piece of carefully revised writing from that week's output of writing, on any subject; all the contributions are then taped onto pages in a folder and this becomes a class 'book' with a series title, number and date.

The Mechanics . . . A small editorial committee may help the teacher to judge which of two or three items selected by a child from his week's output shall be 'accepted for publication'. If it is first-draft material it will probably then be revised and illustrated by the child till it is 'ready for publication'. The contributed sheets, being of irregular size, may be glued or taped onto larger regular sheets which are then stapled into attractively designed coloured cardboard covers. (Fast, accurate workers can be urged to put extra effort into their illustration—bright borders, attractive friezes etc.—while the teacher helps slower ones.)

The Value . . . These class books are a golden way to accumulate the best kind of evaluation record, to show a sequential development running through the class's published work, and to maintain children's interest in writing through writing-for-a-real-purpose. The books become a valuable addition to the *reading* available within the classroom. They can be shown to parents as evidence of progress in writing skill. And they serve as an example and standard to next year's class.

BOOKS OF ALL KINDS

1. **A.B.C. Books.** These can take many forms, from an illustrated dictionary to an A.B.C. of the Ocean or TV or Space. Or they can deal with word play or nonsense themes like 'A . . . An Active Ant Ate An Aimless Arachnid', or 'Bob's Bad Brother Breaks Beer Bottles Before Breakfast'.

2. **Story Books.** Remember, good stories are hard to write! Discuss plots. Give examples from stories and novels. What does 'dramatic' mean? Try out orally a first draft. How can it be made more dramatic?

3. **Poetry Books.** Everyone contributes a poem for a class anthology. Or a child writes poems throughout the year till enough are collected to make a book.

4. **'My Best Writing'—Individual Scrapbook.** A minimum of four high-standard pieces per term. Program an afternoon towards the end of each term for pasting and illustrating. Motivate by sending to the Principal for a written comment, then to parents for their comment. And see the books go to next year's teacher.

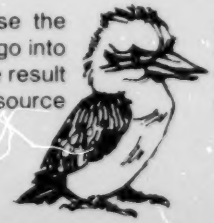
5. **'Introducing Our Class'.** This can be put together early in first term. Everyone contributes a short autobiographical piece. To this can be added information about school and classroom rules, tuckshop details, games etc. Special purpose: the book can be handed to newcomers to the class.

6. **'Famous People'.** Follow 5 with an extravaganza: each pupil—and the teacher!—presents herself or himself as a VIP, heroine, record-breaker, genius, or whatever. Stimulus: some of the more bizarre Guinness records.

7. **Autograph Album.** Resurrect this old idea—but with a difference: an attractively covered book with a blank page for each pupil, who then contributes a photo (or self-portrait sketch), a signature, and not just a list of details but a spirited comment on personality and interests.

8. **'I'd Like To Be . . .'** Pupils draw pictures and write descriptions of themselves carrying out the jobs that most attract them. Especially good with young children.

9. **'What Do You Know About . . .?' Series.** Pupils choose the theme, then a brainstorming session works out questions, which go into a lucky-dip. Each pupil researches and writes up his draw, and the result is polished for inclusion in a book which becomes classroom resource material.



10. **Riddle and Joke Books.** Each pupil contributes a page in answer to 'What is the funniest thing you've heard, seen or read?' Encourage personal expression; discourage copying from commercial sources.

11. **'How To . . .' Books.** These can be done by individuals or by groups. Allow maximum free choice so as to keep at the child's level—not only the obviously 'worthy' subjects but, if suggested, 'How to build a cubby', 'How to drive parents mad', 'I hate school' etc. (D. H. Lawrence said of adult writers, 'We shed our sicknesses in books'!). Finished volumes can become family gifts or birthday presents.

12. **Recipe Books.** For ideas, look at the huge variety of titles in bookshops. 'Kids in the Kitchen'? Or Greek, or Italian or any other ethnic group's recipes. Or Australian colonial recipes, child-researched with historical notes and illustrations.

13. **A Giant Book.** Make this at least as tall as the shortest child in the class, the cover cut from an appliance box and stiff enough to stand upright on the floor; the pages cut from butcher's paper on which the children paste and decorate their contributions. Advertise as 'The Biggest Book in the School'—available for borrowing by envious classes.

14. **'The Longest Story Ever!'** Work with strips of butcher's paper 150 mm wide. Launch a topic which children can take up whenever they have a spare moment, each new addition to the story being cellotaped onto the last. Roll as the story progresses; keep it going all year; and resist the temptation to read it before the end of third term. (If the class becomes bored, lend the roll for a time to another class, then get it back and continue.)

15. **A 'Group' Story.** Vote on a title, plot and characters. Each group is responsible weekly for writing a chapter; finally, the whole class can take part in editing. Try to get the edited version typed, then illustrate it and bind it so that it can be presented to the Principal and parents. Or post it to the class's favourite author, with a letter of explanation.

16. **An All-School Story.** Your class writes the first episode of a story, then sends it, 'Round Robin' style, to all the other classes, with each adding its episode. Urge care in polishing to maintain a high standard. A week per episode. Your class, as the originator, writes the conclusion. Can a parent handle the typing? Type at least two copies, so that your class can keep one and send another to the library. This can become an annual school tradition!

NEWSPAPERS

If teachers aim very high, they often have difficulty sustaining this project. Once a term is enough when quality is required. Study layout with the class, noting the wide coverage of subjects. Include some practice in ad-writing because of its value for graphic and economical writing. Try for real newspaper size, using butcher's or litho paper. Print items on column-width strips of unlined paper and, when these are in polished, edited form, paste them in ar d rule column lines around them. (The teacher-editor will find a bottle of white correction fluid helpful.) See that all pupils get something into a class paper, which can be circulated by sending home on a nightly basis to parents.

17. 'School News'. This takes organisation, with one teacher centrally responsible, and perhaps an editorial group consisting of one or two reps from each class. Get the non-news features written and then decide that next week will be news week—reporters then get to work collecting stories from around the school. The Editorial Group decide on the lead story and the weight to be given to other stories. Then . . . final writing, layout, production, distribution. If the whole school can't be drawn into this project, then attempt something less ambitious, using the writing resources of your single class.

18. 'Family News'. A newspaper featuring family activities, hobbies, jobs, trips, purchases, likes and dislikes. Recommend books, films, TV shows. Invite letters or short articles from parents. For a centre-spread, try a competition such as 'Five Rules for Children and Five for Parents'.

19. 'Good News'. Expose the morbid and sensational tendencies of the mass media by producing a 'good-news'-only newspaper. Children can be asked to collect examples from the press and—when they find there aren't many—produce news of their own.

20. 'District News'. Examples of the unlimited possibilities here . . . Get the children to ferret out new and interesting facts about the district, its history (from the elderly and from records), economy (from business people), social, recreational and sporting life (from parents, clubs, service organisations), and government (from the local council and MPs). Practise interviewing and work out 3-4 basic questions to ask. You might uncover something undesirable (pollution? a dangerous intersection? shortage of recreational facilities?) and could initiate a letter-writing campaign apart from what the newspaper says on the subject.

21. 'Crazy Paper'. Distort nursery rhymes to make a very different sort of newspaper: 'Old Woman in Shoe Because of Housing Shortage!' 'UFO Reported Passing Over Moon—But Farmer Claims It Was His Cow!' An Agony Column could get letters from Georgie Porgie, Miss Muffet *et al.* Advertisements from Lucy Locket (for her pocket) etc.

SIMPLE NEWS SHEETS

22. News Writing Competition. Conduct this once a term. The news could be actual school or local events or an historical event that requires research, e.g. 'Man Invents a Wheel', 'Gold Discovered in Australia', 'Chewing Gum Invented'. Show how to write up a 'news flash', perhaps with a simple picture. Let the class decide the two or three best, then run off some copies (say 30-40 of each) under a head like 'Special Edition', and deliver to the Principal, staffroom, other classes, parents, as decided. Feature each reporter's name.

23. About Favourite Books. More interesting than a book review is a news sheet such as 'Girl Outwits Wolf' (on Catherine Storr's *Clever Polly and the Stupid Wolf*), or 'Children in Plane Crash' (on Ivan Southall's *To the Wild Sky*).

24. Natural Science with a Twist. A news sheet can report under the heading 'I've Been Robbed' about a tree losing its leaves; or 'Sudden Death' about a spider killing a fly.

25. Stop Press. Be on the watch for class events (and accidents!) which can become the subject of quick reporting.

MAGAZINES

As with newspapers, avoid being over-ambitious. One good issue, a single copy, can be work enough for a term. Freed from the need to make multi-copies, you can concentrate on the excellence of a class magazine which will be proudly lodged in the library after showing to parents. Model it on a real magazine and have all of the main features, but insist on the writing being relevant to the age of the children, and thus avoid copying. Use plenty of colour and illustration.

26. 'Getting to Know You'. An issue at the beginning of the year can feature information of all sorts about class members. Add some incidental features in humorous vein—say, about diet, exercise, civic spirit, manners, how to make friends, how to get on with adults.

27. Specialist Magazines. Just as there are adult magazines about special topics such as 'Spear-fishing' or 'Postage Stamps', so the class could choose a popular topic for a magazine (kites? campfire cooking? TV comment?). Try to include a little history.

28. 'What You Want to Know about High School'. A Year 6 class can send a team to interview secondary students and teachers, then write up stories about subjects, uniforms, routines, study patterns etc.

29. Holiday Magazine. Ask the class to think up useful suggestions for keeping occupied in the coming vacation: things to do, TV worth watching, places to visit, shows to see, books to read, things to write—and also a crop of crosswords, puzzles, quizzes, games.

30. 'Class of '8__'. A great way to reflect on the year almost finished—and to keep a record for future nostalgic tripping. Endless possibilities: 'Our Finest Moment', 'How It Might Have Been So Different', 'These Things I Want to Remember' (or '. . . Forget'), 'Our Best Excursion', 'But What Did We Learn?' etc. If items are kept brief, dramatic and humorous, with every pupil contributing, then the resulting small magazine might be duplicated and sent home.

Dear Teacher, Would you please read us some more stories about giants.

LETTERS

Letters are an extremely important form of writing, especially the personal kind, which tend to be naturally expressive and therefore a proper activity in the struggle for writing fluency . . . Why not a write-a-letter session two or three times a week, with sessions lasting only 15 minutes—enough for short, spontaneous but quite effective personal writing? As the class gains in experience of the personal letter form, pupils can try less-personal forms.

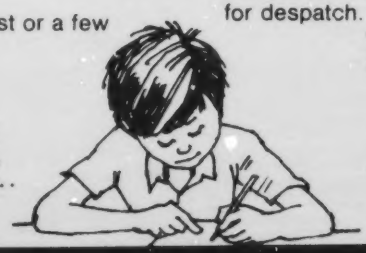
Dear Tom, What are you doing after school?

Dear Libby, the joke Do you know the spotted snake? about

Dear Mum, Thank you for my beaut lunch today.

Dear Gran, Please tell me when you were born. I need it for my project...

Dear Sir, Our class would like you to stop the Year Six kids from pushing us around..



Dear Mrs Smith, Would you please put some more books about pirates in the library...

Dear Dad, Just a note to tell you about...

31. Classroom Mail Box. Instead of persisting in the teaching tradition of suppressing the clandestine 'notes' which children have always passed (and always will pass) to one another--legalise the practice! In fact, encourage and institutionalise it by placing a substantial red 'Mail Box' in a prominent position. Make only minimal rules about its use and clearance and the distribution of the letters each morning. Anyone can write to anyone, including the teacher; privacy completely respected.

32. Teacher Writes Too. If, during each term, the teacher can manage to write a personal letter to every pupil in turn, this becomes a powerful means of developing good feeling, especially if occasions are seized to praise or say thanks—even occasions as elemental as noticing interest in reading or apt words used sometimes in writing. A conventional layout of the letter is desirable, but it need not be long. And at the end the pupil can be invited to write back. Post it to home if possible.

33. To Mum and/or Dad. Telling something of interest that has happened at school. Deliver after school.

34. To Gran and/or Grandad. Telling something of interest or a few jokes or riddles heard recently. Post or deliver.

35. To the Principal. Telling something good about the school and/or something that could be improved. Deliver at once.

36. To a Person in the News. Expressing, perhaps, congratulations for something accomplished. Post all these letters in one envelope.

37. To a Media Personality. Expressing views on, say, a TV or radio show. Post care of the channel or station.

38. To a Librarian. Giving impressions of a book recently borrowed. Deliver in person.

39. To the School Bus Driver. Expressing appreciation of care taken. (Similarly with any other helping adult.) Deliver personally.

40. To a Favourite Author. Expressing thanks and telling briefly what appeals. Post care of the publisher.

41. To the Local Paper. Drawing the editor's attention to some local problem or injustice. The teacher may select the most effective letters for despatch.

PLAYS

Give 'acting out' a central place in language teaching and learning—that has been the message of a few enlightened teachers ever since Caldwell Cook's 'Play Way' early in the century, and nowadays James Moffett is saying 'dramatic interaction, doing things verbally in situations with other people, is the primary vehicle for developing thought and language'. A big claim? No, not if we can shed the attitude that drama is necessarily a much-rehearsed, stagey, highly theatrical business. Drama can be much simpler: a consciousness that people interact in everyday life and that everyone is interested in this interaction. So encourage play-writing, teach its mechanics, get promising stories turned into 5-10 minute plays, and then present them without too much rehearsal—that is, publish them. Here are just a few possibilities.

42. Begin without Dialogue. Show these aspiring playwrights how to write descriptions of characters and explicit stage directions. Try visual jokes without dialogue—perhaps cull comic strips and cartoons for ideas, e.g. the itching tramp at the bus stop who starts everyone else itching. When a script is written it is read by another pupil or first rehearsed by a small group to see if the directions are clear, then an improved version is produced.

43. Proceed through Simple Dialogue. Write skits based on comic books or cartoon strips. Or do a sketch about a comical accident at home or school. Or write a song, or use a traditional or popular one, and convert it to a small play, e.g. 'When Father Painted the Parlour' or 'There's an Elephant in my Bedroom'.

44. Dramatise Stories. Write, say, 'Little Red Riding Hood' or 'Dick Whittington' in play form. Or ask migrant children to dramatise the stories, fables and legends of their countries. Occasionally try a radio play, i.e. voices only—perhaps from behind a screen.

45. Dramatise Poems. Children are often surprised to learn that a poem—and narrative and humorous poems serve well here—can be turned into a play. For example, R. H. Barham's 'Jackdaw of Rheims' or Hilaire Belloc's 'Matilda'.

46. Try Melodrama. Children love to exaggerate characters! Get them thinking in melodramatic terms by reading snippets of 'Maria Martin' or 'Murder in the Red Barn'. Then turn them loose on faithful, simpering heroines, wronged and misunderstood heroes, repulsive and dastardly villains etc.

47. An End-of-Term Drama Festival. Forget the old, stock plays and have the children prepare their own plays—for presentation to other classes or to parents.

NOTICE BOARDS

Very basic to the publishing of children's work are notice boards in the classroom. They must stay bright and up-to-date. Apart from day-by-day pinning up of work, why not plan at least three major displays a term? These can become occasions for showing the importance of good design. **A tip:** *All sorts of shapes and figures cut from magazines can be projected in giant silhouette on butcher's paper, using the overhead projector, then traced around, cut out, painted, written on etc. (In addition to notice boards, tape work anywhere: between windows, on both sides of the door, on tabletops under plastic, along corridors, on free-standing sandwich boards etc., not to mention special displays in the school's entrance foyer and library.)*

IDEAS FOR DISPLAYING DAY-TO-DAY WORK

48. Here's Good Work! A figure painting, with mouth open, and perhaps a speech-bubble saying, 'Here's good work!'

49. Have You Read This? An octopus holds a page of written work in each tentacle, and says, 'Have you read this?'

50. Food for the Mind. A basket, or cornucopia, with giant fruit and vegetables, each serving as a frame for a story or poem—captioned 'Food for the mind'.

51. Mail Train. Each carriage of a train carries a letter on it—or a story, paragraph or poem.

52. Garden of Poems. The notice board is a garden of large blooms and leaves, each with a poem pinned to it.

53. Balloons or Kites. Bright cardboard shapes such as these float about the board, each with its own writing.

54. All Up in the Air! A more grandiose project than 53. Can take the form of asking the class to think of everything that moves above the earth: birds, kites, balloons, aeroplanes, rockets, stars. Make a fascinating large display of these above the earth (flowers, trees, cities, oceans) and each object then becomes a vehicle to which writing can be pinned.

SPECIAL DISPLAYS TO SHARE WITH OTHERS

55. Information Charts. These can summarise data collected for a current project, each in an attractive easy-to-read format.

56. Posters. Picture, name and reasons for fame of 'Famous Women' (Red Riding Hood, Alice in Wonderland etc.), 'Sportsmen of the Year' (Jack the Giant Killer etc.) or any other theme.

57. Conversations. Using large figures at the top of the board, e.g. a cat saying 'He said . . .' and a dog replying 'She said . . .', pupils can take turns carefully writing a conversation which might remain pinned up for a week.

58. Patchwork Quilt. On a large board or wall space stick sheets of coloured paper side by side, each a little larger than quarto size. Each pupil then selects a 'patch' and undertakes to fill it with well decorated, much polished writing of any kind. Don't rush the writing. Make this a slowly emerging, carefully managed project, yielding at last a thing of beauty and excellence.

59. Sandwich Man. Younger children love being walking advertisers as 'sandwich men'. Their 'sandwich boards' can consist of two cardboard sheets slung from the shoulders. Good writing or 'coming events' are pasted to these boards and the walking ads are turned loose at recess or lunchtime.

60. Advertisements. Children can be asked to write ads for class or school functions, using attention-getting phrases in punchy ad-style. Feature these on school notice boards, read on school assembly, or duplicate and send home.

SPECIAL DISPLAYS AND EXHIBITIONS

61. Girl/Boy-of-the-Week Display. Each pupil is allotted a week in which to display a cardboard sheet on which is presented auto-biographical photos, drawings, writing. 'Me as a 2-year-old', 'With my family' etc. Likes and dislikes, ambitions, holiday preferences, TV tastes, and anything else ingenuity suggests . . . A very popular publication.

62. Rogues' Gallery. Remember the art of making paper dolls? Make life-size ones and run them as a frieze around the classroom walls, perhaps girls on one side, boys on the other. Pupils write on them a description of themselves or of famous villains from nursery rhymes and fairy tales.

63. Corridor as Cemetery. In the art lesson, make cardboard tomb-stones of various shapes, then write epitaphs, e.g. to an over-worked pupil, or parent, or teacher. Erect them secretly in the corridor and sur-prise the rest of the school.

64. Toy Exhibition. Organise a 'Toy Exhibition' for other classes to visit. Pupils write up historical data collected about toys (invention of dolls, mechanical trains, teddy bears etc.). They also design and write all the programs, posters, letters of invitation. Charge 5c admission and use the proceeds to buy a toy for the nearest children's home.

65. Circus Exhibition. Paint pictures and make large cut-outs of circus performers and animals, and build models of tents, menageries, trucks. Write about the history of the circus, lives of performers, stories of possible incidents etc. Send pupil-designed invitations to other classes.

66. Stamp Exhibition. There are usually enough well-kept stamp albums in a class to make this possible. Pupils also research the history of postage, writing up the beginnings of stamps and stories of famous stamps and collections.

67. Photographic Exhibition. Make colour photographs the core of several exhibits. For example, write a short play, rehearse it and get photos of key points, then arrange the photos on a wall display with dramatic writing accompanying each picture. Later, this might be turned into a book that can be circulated to parents. The play could be the real life kind or a familiar story, e.g. *Hansel and Gretel*—perhaps in modern dress.

68. Photo Exhibition of a Field Trip. Always take photos on a field trip. The class's later reports can then be accompanied by the photos.

ASSEMBLY REPORTS

69. A Sampling of Good Writing. To raise the status of writing in the school, see that each class is given a chance from time to time to present a few short pieces of its best writing to the assembly, e.g. a poem, a story, a joke, a field report. Always a variety of forms.

70. Reporting. Any newsworthy class activity can be the subject of a pupil-delivered report to the assembly, e.g. a classroom exhibition, an excursion, a sporting achievement, books-we've-read-this-year. Later, display the written report on the main school notice board.

71. Celebrating Anniversaries. Special reports can be given on assembly to commemorate the birth or death of a great writer or the publication of one of his best-known works, e.g. Jules Verne, Hans Christian Andersen, R. L. Stevenson. Children can write short biographies and an outline of a book, and read excerpts from their works.

USING ART AND CRAFT WORK

While most art and craft work will be carried out for its intrinsic experience of beauty and satisfaction, writing, which is itself a craft (or is it art?), can merge harmoniously with this work. A poem about a cat can have more dramatic impact if it is written within a colourful cut-out of a cat; a sensitive haiku can be most aptly placed in a beautifully decorated greetings card. The artistic form within which the writing is finally presented serves as a stimulus to the writer-artist to make spelling, grammar and handwriting as perfect as possible.

MOBILES OFFER ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES

72. Mobiles of All Sorts. Shapes of flowers, animals, insects, people etc., offer endless opportunities to display poems, sentences, paragraphs, jokes etc.

73. Group Production of Mobiles. Five or six pupils can combine to produce, say, poems or descriptions about ships, written on a number of cardboard tugboats which are then hung around a central lighthouse.

74. A Class Mobile. Groups can research, say, Australian animals. Then each group shapes the animal it is responsible for, writes on it, and decorates it, and hangs it as part of the class mobile.

ENORMOUS POSTERS

75. Make posters about 2 metres square. Within this, draw the outline of the sun, a flower, an apple, a stylised tree, or whatever else can be made brilliantly colourful. Fill in the outline with patterns of coloured paper clipped from magazines and pasted on, as for a montage or mosaic. Pupils' writing, relevant to the theme suggested by the object, can be arranged on the background. Hang this for a time in the school entrance area.

WINDOW CRAFT

76. Write the final draft of a poem directly onto the glass with a felt-tipped pen. Or experiment with the interesting effects that can be obtained by using coloured writing and illustration on butcher's paper which is then rendered translucent by brushing over with cooking oil and taped on the glass.

CARDS

77. Birthday Cards. Make these for family and friends, writing original verse, or messages with a warmly personal note.

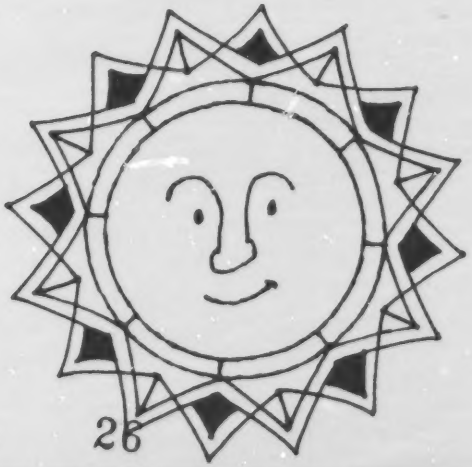
78. Congratulations Cards. Spend a couple of afternoons in which pupils work out a large selection of these, ready for appropriate occasions, e.g. 'Congratulations for writing the week's best story'—or for reading most books this term, or for winning the netball match etc.

79. 'Hand-out Cards'. To convey messages about coming events, cut out enormous hands from coloured cardboard and write the message on these, e.g. about new books in the library, or about an exhibition in Children's Book Week or Earth Week. Pupils can take the cards around the classes, offering their 'hand-outs'.

MURALS

80. Portrait Gallery. After art lessons have dealt with self-portraits, each child paints his or her own, cuts it out, and pastes it to a large sheet of frieze or cover paper (so that the sheets can be overlapped a little to give an interesting effect). Then a description, in prose or poetry, is polished to perfection and written above or below the portrait. Erect this in the assembly hall.

81-5. Variations. Write about and portray: Passengers waiting at a bus stop . . . Performers at a concert . . . Dancers at a discotheque . . . Cats on a fence . . . Shoppers in a supermarket.



USING TAPE RECORDERS

It is vital to give children a sense of privacy while they are using a tape recorder to compose creatively. So set up a quiet, enclosed space in a classroom corner or corridor, perhaps by using cartons or curtains as a screen. Here are three ways to encourage better writing.

86. Write—Tape—Revise. The pupil first writes a story, then reads it onto tape. He or she can then play it back one or more times while editing the story. Polished stories can be used to publish in another form (e.g. contribution to a class book) or can be recorded on tape for sharing with others.

87. Tape, then Write. Children who find writing a labour may be relatively free with oral expression. Encourage them to make up a story or report, perhaps only jotting down a few notes to assist the memory; then speak onto tape. Guided by the play-back, they can compose onto paper, polish, then re-record. Allow this finished tape and the recorder to be taken home, together with the written version, for playing to parents.

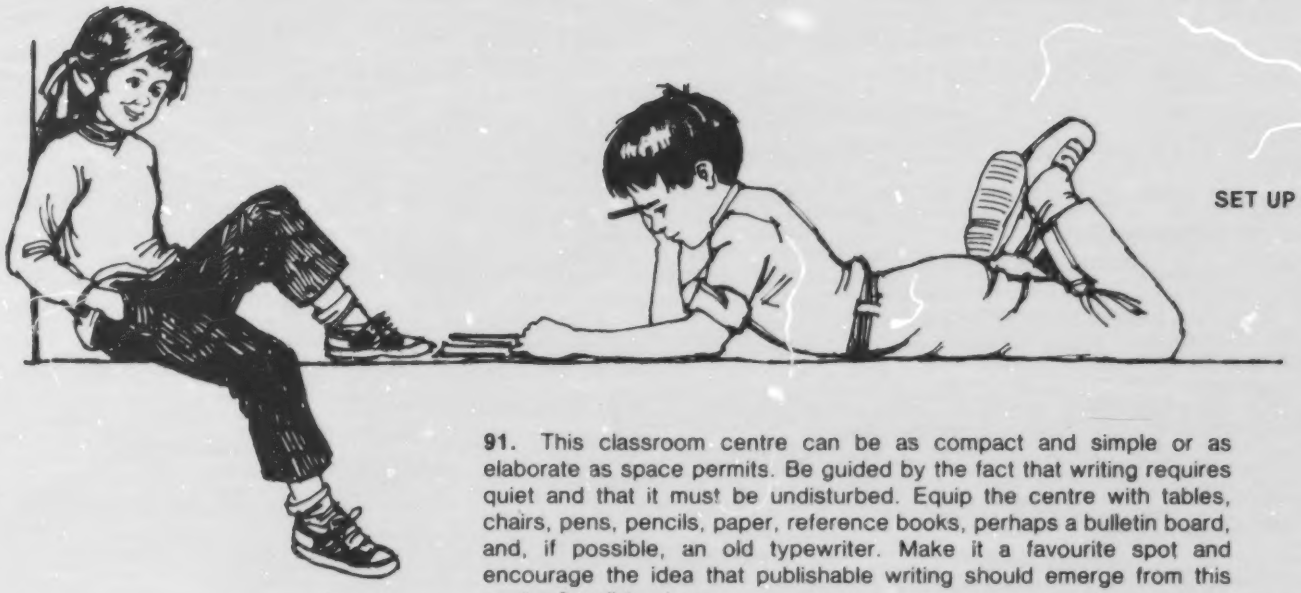
88. Regular Recording by Struggling Writers. Each week encourage the 'less able' writers to record a small part of their work. This gives them a chance to strive alongside those good at writing. It is also a useful way to add to the evaluation record.

CARTOON SHOW

89. This needs an overhead projector. Everyone begins by writing a story, e.g. about a proverb or wise saying. From a general reading and discussion, select or synthesise a good version. Show pupils how to prepare 5-6 transparencies, each carrying an episode, with a picture and the story underneath. Present the 'show' to another class.

RUN AN ADVERTISING AGENCY

90. Explain the diversified activities of advertising agencies. Then have the class carry on as such an agency. Small groups could become responsible for devising a major promotion for a new product, e.g. a group each for TV, radio, newspapers, women's magazines, public hoardings, and circular letters. Pupils could agree on a spectacular product, e.g. a cure-all, a soft drink, a solar invention. Then draft and polish ads till they are very concise and dramatic. Finally arrange the presentation as a whole class advertising exhibition.



SET UP A WRITERS' CENTRE

91. This classroom centre can be as compact and simple or as elaborate as space permits. Be guided by the fact that writing requires quiet and that it must be undisturbed. Equip the centre with tables, chairs, pens, pencils, paper, reference books, perhaps a bulletin board, and, if possible, an old typewriter. Make it a favourite spot and encourage the idea that publishable writing should emerge from this centre for all to share.

FORM A WRITERS' CLUB

92. Invite children to join a club which meets weekly (perhaps in the second half of lunchtime). Possible activities: (a) Writers' Exchange, which reads and comments on work, (b) Writers' Competition, to see who can write the best story, funniest joke etc., (c) Poetry Reading, with everyone reading their own creations, (d) News Reporting, with everyone collecting a story around the school and reading it, (e) Spontaneous Writing, with everyone writing for ten minutes on a topic devised by a member, then reading and commenting. All these activities are simpler than the inevitable suggestion that the club should produce a magazine or newspaper—a task which usually becomes overwhelming. (If the teacher can't find time for such a club, could a parent take it?)

HOLD A WRITERS' BARBECUE

93. This may take many forms. (After school on Friday? Or more expansively on a Saturday?) At its simplest, read out work already polished in class. More ambitiously, conduct it on workshop lines, perhaps under a guest writer, with demonstrations of certain forms, e.g. short poem, paragraph of description, some dialogue, or more demanding forms, followed by writing and rewriting, then reading from circulated pages and some reading aloud. A duplicated bulletin might be run off at the end of the day, featuring some of the best writing. Parents might join in the workshop.

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A WIDER AUDIENCE

These suggestions require stepping outside the school to achieve involvement in the local community.

94. A Shop Display. Will a local shop or bank take a display of your pupils' work? Insist that the children do their best possible work. The writing could key into the products carried by the shop, e.g. research and write on textiles, or marketplaces through the centuries. Display the work in ways that economise space. Send a note to parents asking them to visit (which will please the host).

95. Displays for Special Events. Think ahead to Mother's Day, St. Valentine's Day or some other national day or anniversary. Or do something to help a charity or the Save the Children Fund. Arrange appropriate displays of writing in a large store or local government building.

96. Municipal Library Display. Ask the librarian to take a display of your children's writing on, say, animal books, space fiction, or the work of an Australian author such as Ivan Southall or Patricia Wrightson.

97. A Hospital Visit. Can a display and a swarm of readers present their writing at a local hospital, old people's centre, handicapped children's centre etc?

98. Children's Magazines. Check on children's magazines, local, Australian and overseas, and submit the class's best writing. Study first the kinds of writing favoured by these publications and send only what seems appropriate.

99. P. & C. Readings. Each term, pick half a dozen stories, poems, reports etc. and arrange for the authors to present them at the next Parents and Citizens meeting.

100. End-of-year Report to Local Newspaper. Arrange with the local editor to print a snappy selection of the class's or school's best writing of the year. Ask him to stipulate the lay-out he requires, then carefully keep to his specification—single column, some double column spreads etc. And take the opportunity (in verse? in a letter?) to thank the community for its interest and wish it a Happy New Year.

PROOF OF THE PUDDING!

IT REALLY DOES WORK

BUY-A-BOOK DAY AT ORANGE INFANTS SCHOOL, N.S.W.

Dawn Callan

The Idea Grew Out of Reading

I'd conducted a survey on 'What does reading mean to you?' Various age groups all responded very positively, as this sampling shows: *Infants Child,* 'Reading is the most important thing in the world'; *Lower Primary Child,* '. . . enjoyment, adventure, excitement, relaxation, fun'; *Upper Primary Child,* '. . . enjoyment on a rainy day . . . being in your own world'; *Secondary Student,* '. . . food for thought'; *Tertiary Student,* '. . . enjoyable activity for relieving tension, for pure pleasure, for finding out new and interesting things'; *Teacher,* '. . . key to all the world; *Parent,* '. . . learning, and teaching oneself self-expression'.

Clearly, reading is vital to all aspects of our development. ***We therefore decided to give every child the opportunity to 'publish' a book of his or her own.*** This should be done, we felt, within our school policy of integrating the various subject areas.

Aims and Organisation

We decided that the books would go on sale at a special 'Buy-a-Book Day'. The writing would be done throughout first term and the sale take place in the last week, after parents had been sent an explanatory letter. First term seemed the right time because the project would imbue a love of reading and writing which would benefit the school's work throughout the rest of the year.

Accordingly we set down our aims for the child, the teachers, the parents. *The child* would help in choosing a group topic, take an active role in compiling the book and organising its publication, talk over ideas freely, integrate various subject areas, and invite the family to share the experience. *The teacher* would initiate and motivate the project, help the child at all stages including the integration of subjects, take part in editing, and arrange the final display and sale. *The parents* would help the child with research where necessary, attend on the sale day, and consider buying the child's book as an addition to the family library.

Class	Title	Contents
Kinder:	*Families:*	Own family, and info. from discussion with other children.
Kinder:	*About Me:*	The child describes all aspects of himself, herself.
Kinder:	*My World:*	The child's surroundings, particularly the school.
Kinder:	*Now I Am Big:*	Activities the child engages in during Kindergarten.
Vt. Gp:	*A Book About Me:*	The child from pre-school to the present.
Yr One:	*Look, I've Made a Book:*	A 'variety' book, all aspects of school work.
Yr One:	*Our City:*	How the child adapts to his or her town or city.
Yr One:	*My Garden of Work:*	Creative and directed work, written and artistic.
Yr One:	*The Sea World:*	Sea stories, paintings, poems, puzzles, pictures.
Yr Two:	*The World About Me:*	Needs and life styles of people around us.
Yr Two:	*Roar Cat! Laugh Clown!*	Concertina book of lit. on a circus theme.
Yr Two:	*What is Dark?*	Fact and fiction on the theme of 'darkness'.

Buy-a-Book Day

As the 'volumes' neared completion, invitations were sent to parents, and the 'School Notes' of the local newspaper carried a public invitation.

Our school courtyard became 'Bookstall Alley' and the books were imaginatively displayed in ways planned by each class.

During the morning, the children enjoyed viewing the displays of the other classes. During lunch (to allow 'Dads' to come) and throughout the afternoon the books were on public display. Parent volunteers helped with the selling. To prevent depletion of the stalls, we used the art exhibition device of a 'sold' sticker, so that books were not taken till the end of the day.

It was a memorable event. The children were delighted to have published and sold a book; and they were intrigued by the immense variety of formats and designs. The teachers all agreed that the work had been definitely worth it. Parents were full of praise: 'The best book I've ever read!' (her son's); 'The most interesting bookshop I've visited!'; 'This will be the most precious item in our home!' (her kindergarten child's first book); and so on.

A Few Points Worth Noting

Some ingredients of the day's success were: the co-operation of everyone in choosing a variety of topics and methods of presentation; integration of the project with everyday classroom activities; the involvement of *every* child; the enthusing of the parents; a uniform price for all books; the careful organising of the day itself.

And an important matter: What happens to unsold books? There were very few of these. Some were bought by teachers to add to their collection of 'ideas books'. Others were included as 'very special' additions to classroom libraries. No child has a sense of failure.

No doubt other schools would wish to vary our form of a 'Buy-a-Book Day'. I recommend that you try one—soon.

Dawn Callan

Postscript: Buy-a-Book Day at Calare Primary School

Calare Primary has copied Mrs Callen's idea and we have found it an excellent method of getting children to write for a very appreciative audience.

As we have parent interviews at about this time, following our half yearly reports, we hope to use the books as an evaluation technique during parent-teacher discussion time next year. Parents will be asked to keep this year's books and compare the progress their children have made by looking at the books children have made one year later.

I certainly add my entreaties to Mrs Callan's that you try one.—M.H.

50 Practical WAYS to Promote an Interest in Reading

CLASSROOM TRICKS

1. **'Books NOBODY Should Miss!'** Carry this heading on a large blank sheet (e.g. newsprint) pinned prominently to a wall or door. Encourage children to write on it in bright texta colours the title-and-author of books they are currently keen about. Add some yourself.

2. **Weekly Book Display.** Make sure there *is* a weekly change, with individuals or groups helping you, or taking full responsibility, in setting up an imaginative display, using posters, snappy extracts, toys, models, puppets—anything to publicise titles.

3. **Reader's Guide to Great Books.** On cards, write or type the title, author and brief resume of each book. Put the cards in a series of boxes, with a sketch or picture on the outside of each to indicate subject-matter, e.g. a burglar for the mystery stories. Children can add cards. Children get the habit of consulting the cards for a book to read.

4. **'This Week's Author'.** Each week, feature an author by means of a 5-minute talk in which you give some biographical details and mention the main titles. Read some key passages as a sampling of the author's style and subject-matter and thus whet their appetite for one or more titles.

5. **'Reader for a Week'.** Each week, appoint one child to this role—to read aloud all written messages, call the roll, announce group lists, and so forth.

6. **Share Your Enthusiasm.** As spontaneously as possible tell the children about the book you are currently reading. This can be the moment for them to express *their* enthusiasm for what *they* are reading.

7. **More Shelf Space.** When the classroom library gets beyond available shelving—what happens? Ingenuity must find a way. For example, can one of the classroom cupboards be used? 'But it's full of bits and pieces . . .' Well, how about buying a second-hand filing cabinet to take all that paraphernalia? Then brightly paint or paper the cupboard to make it a paperback library. (All the more available if the doors are removed?)

8. **'Reading for Many Purposes'.** Your bulletin board can periodically carry this title. The children bring in a variety of *forms* of reading, e.g. a recipe, birthday card, ad, parking ticket, street map, religious tract, political pamphlet. Discuss the immense variety, the different styles, the importance of being able to read *anything*.

9. **Search the Catalogues.** Instead of filing them in the w.p.b., pass those publishers' catalogues around the class so that the children can pick likely-sounding books. They add their choices to a wall list which is carefully consulted when books are to be bought for the library.

10. **'Let's Travel!'** Collect travel brochures and spend an hour discussing them with the class. Suggest books about the featured countries. (Also, use travel posters when displaying books about particular countries.)

11. **'Books of the World'.** On a large outline wall-map of the world, children write the titles of books within or beside the relevant countries. In third term, turn all this into a detective game: 'How many titles and countries can you relate?'

12. **Subscriptions.** Take out class subscriptions to good children's magazines. Make their arrival by mail an event worth getting excited about.

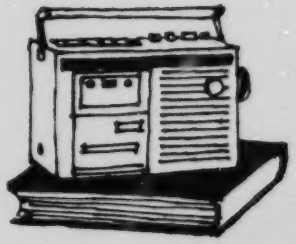
MAKE USE OF SOUND

13. Hooked by Chapter One. Read the first chapter of a good book onto a cassette: 'To find what happens, borrow the book for reading at home'.

14. Children's Choice. Urge children to be on the watch for exciting passages in their reading. Then, giving title and author, they can read the passages onto tape. Thus, build up a number of tapes for the Listening Post. (Children who finish a task and have time to spare can listen in.)

15. Story-telling Records. Hunt for story-telling records and cassette tapes. Use them for listening periods or when children are working quietly on craft activities. (Groups may be encouraged to make similar tapes and surprise the class with them in the following week.)

16. Poetry on Tape. Don't overlook poetry when suggesting child-made tapes. Brevity and variety usually go down best: an alternation of comic and serious poems, poems about various animals, or various people etc.



BOOKS FOR SPECIAL DAYS

17. A Monthly Book Day. Plan a special day for each school month and celebrate it with books, e.g.

February .... Joke Book Day
March ..... Magazine Day
April..... Animal Story Day

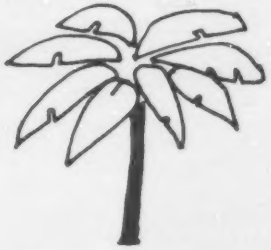
Each child brings a relevant book for the Day. Make time available, or save up the week's reading time, for a luxurious splurge in which the whole afternoon is spent sharing and swapping.

18. Celebrate Important Anniversaries. As well as Anzac Day and other national, state and ethnic 'days', there are many possibilities such as Shakespeare's birthday and days proclaimed by UNESCO for remembrance of other world literary figures. Is an outside speaker possible?

19. Anniversaries of Australian Authors. Collect information from the *Australian Encyclopedia*, Australian Information Service, and other sources. Is data available on their childhood as well as later career? In the case of living authors, why not write to them and ask? This might be called simply 'Writer's Birthday' and be the occasion for a birthday cake, a display of the author's books, and readings from these books.

20. And Your Birthday! As a fun thing, announce that you can't think of a better way to celebrate a birthday than by reading to the class your favourite story and/or poems. Or you could read a birthday story such as 'Eeyore's Birthday' from A. A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh*.

21. Children's Book Week. There are many well-known ways of celebrating this (third week in July). Here's a further suggestion: encourage the children to spend the day dressed as a character from a favourite book—but explain the idea to parents well in advance.



'CRAFTY' BOOK DISPLAYS

22. Special Displays. Set up classroom displays from time to time, e.g. 'Books for Rainy Days', 'Any Time is Reading Time', 'How to Use the Library', 'Books for Very Brave Readers' (about ghosts), '*Witch* Books to Read', 'Who's Murdering Who?', 'Very High Flying' (space travel).

23. Book Tree. Make an enormous one on a wall or at least to fill the back of the door. Children can use coloured cover and frieze paper to make leaves, then paste these (bearing title, author, brief description) to the tree—one for every book read in class or at home this year. Don't check how *many* a child does, but praise everyone lavishly as the tree grows. And don't forget to add your own. (Some time, too, try a 'Poem Tree'—or 'Poet Tree'!)

24. Another Book Tree. Firmly wedge a large bare branch of a tree into a bucket or bin. This time, tie the 'leaves' to the twigs—or the leaves could be cut in 'book shapes'—with data as in 23.

25. Bookworms. Have fun making coloured, striped and spotted bookworms in the art lesson. Invite the children to draw their own faces on them, with a caption saying 'Stevie Sims of 4B is a Bookworm'. Display them freely on classroom and corridor walls. And remind the artists to live up to their public reputations.

26. Picture Gallery. Have a permanent picture gallery of characters from fiction on one wall. Children paint or draw their favourites—with name, title and author.

27. Relate Books to Hobbies. When displaying craft work, such as model aeroplanes, pottery, cane or enamel ware, surround the exhibits with art and craft books and, if possible, related fiction.

28. Puppets in the Service of Reading. Learn and teach the art of making quick, simple puppets so that children can use them to tell an exciting episode from a book.

29. Mobiles in the Service of Reading. Each week let one group make a mobile about characters from a book they have enjoyed. Run them on fishing line erected high overhead, and keep them as a book reminder for a term or for the whole year.

READING OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL

30. Very Practical Reading. Constantly talk about *reading* maps, *reading* street directories, *reading* recipes, *reading* trade books etc. Reading has a thousand uses!

31. Go for a 'Reading' Walk. Ask, 'Do we live in a print-soaked world?' Then go for a local or city walk, each child seeing how much reading needs to be done and whether he or she can understand all the signs, billboards, labels, brochures etc.

32. Inspect a Major Store. Make a special 'reading' tour of a large supermarket or department store (having first liaised with the manager!).

33. Visit the Local Library. Notify the librarian well ahead, so that the children are made to feel welcome and are shown around. (If your numbers may overtax a small library, enlist the help of mothers and arrange several visits by small groups.)

34. A Specific Reading Task. Set each child a specific problem: 'When must you catch a bus or train in order to get to X by such-and-such a time?' Then take the class to a railway station or bus terminal to *read* the timetable and work out answers. This reading has more impact amid the noise and rush than in the quiet of the classroom.

35. Election Days. Don't miss the reading opportunities offered by a State or Federal election or referendum. Talk about the approaching election day; get the children to collect party leaflets, ads, letters to voters etc.; suggest that they accompany their parents to the booths and collect how-to-vote slips. Pool and discuss the materials after the election—and relate the reading material to electioneering by other media.

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INVOLVE THE CHILDREN

36. Pupils Help Pupils. Kindergarten and Year One children can be visited by children from higher classes who bring well-loved books to read to or with them in one-to-one situations.

37. Reading on Rainy Lunchtimes. Organise teams of older readers to help Infants teachers when it rains all through lunch.

38. Partners Read Together. Let each child in a class pick a partner so that they can use a special time for reading to each other.

39. Think of the Sick. Invite class participation in choosing books from the classroom or school library to send home to anyone away with measles or mumps.

40. Form a Secret Society. Groups can form such societies, using a password based on particular characters or plots, and inventing a mysterious badge and secret sign to give a gang identity. The role of members is to track down good books and report them to other members.

41. Raise Funds. Organise a cake or toffee stall to raise funds for buying a paperback a month. Place choice of the books in the class's hands and appoint a group to go to a local shop and make the purchase.

42. Individual Buying. Investigate children's book clubs and suggest personal buying of books (e.g. Ashton Scholastic Book Club).

43

INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY

43. Ask Parents to Help. Ask parents and grandparents to help with reading—both at home and by coming once a week to the school, e.g. roster the volunteers for the daily 'Story Hour'. Always have several together at any one time for moral support; they then take a group of pupils each. If it's fine, move outside; if not, use corridors or the assembly hall when the classroom is too crowded. Finish the occasion by having the children offer and organise simple refreshments.

44. Especially Ask Parents from Other Countries to Help. They can bring the nursery stories and books of those countries. They can be presented in the native language and in English, and they can be told directly or put on tape or scribed by the teacher into simple book form.

45. Approach Local Clubs. If you can't get enough parents, try clubs such as Apex and CWA, asking for help in setting up story-telling and story-reading sessions on a regular basis.

46. Parents' Favourite Books. Conduct a class survey to find the favourite books, magazines and comics of parents and grandparents when they were the same age as your pupils. They may contribute examples (as gift or loan) and the children can try them and discuss similarities and differences with modern books.

47. Visit an Old People's Club or Home. By arrangement, the children can take along their favourite stories to read, and perhaps they will be told stories in return. (Read Robin Klein's *Penny Pollard's Diary* (Oxford) for an account of what *might* happen as a result!)

48. Invite a Professional. List people who earn a living by reading—e.g. radio and TV news-readers, proof-readers, editors. Can one of them be persuaded to talk and read to the class?

49. Invite the Bookshop Proprietor. He or she can talk about the book trade, people's tastes, and children's books currently in demand (and show the books while speaking).

50. Invite a Publisher/Editor/Author. Any of these people can tell how books are conceived, drafted, polished, edited, typeset, proofed, printed, bound, promoted, distributed, sold.

PLANNING THE YEAR

Work Backwards!

First week of term, thumb through your diary, refreshing your memory on special days and important events in the school's calendar. Then work backwards from these, making notes for yourself about what to do, e.g.,

1 April: *Prepare material for Easter project. Find interesting stories to share.*

1 July: *Organise Book Week contributions.*

9 November: *Look for something to read on Remembrance Day, preferably a novel about children and war.*

This way you'll earn a reputation as the best organised and most relaxed teacher in the school!

Use Anniversaries. When choosing units of study or themes, check to see if there are relevant dates you could use as a focal point. For example, in planning a unit on James Cook, key into any of these: 29 April, 'Endeavour' anchors in Botany Bay (1770); 22 August, Cook lands on Possession Island (1770); 27 October, Cook's birthdate (1728).

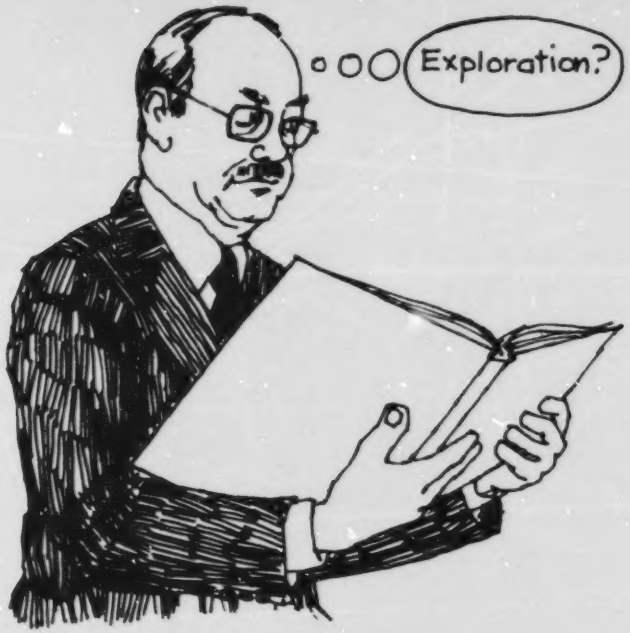
Observe Festivals. Mark the festivals appropriate to each month:

February — St Valentine's Day
March — St David and St Patrick's Day
April — Anzac Day; Easter
May — Mother's Day . . . etc.

Salute Famous People. Note the names of famous people whose birthdates are given in each month. Use the information provided for brief discussion periods about what makes for fame or notoriety. Often projects or writing exercises will spring from a study of the relevant period in history.

Celebrate Special Days. Prepare in advance for special days or weeks, e.g. World Environment Day (5 June); Children's Book Week (3rd week in July); United Nations Day (24 October). Work towards a special display or presentation which can be shared with parents, friends or another class.

Keep a Day Book. Start a class Day Book. Each day choose a different child to record any information known about the particular date, plus a brief description of important happenings in or out of the classroom, e.g. Cyclone in the Northern Territory; Sal Smith's cat had 6 kittens. Encourage illustration and attractive presentation. At the end of the year, cover and label: '5Y's Year Book' or 'Here's What Happened in 198__'.



Special Days

These provide marvellous opportunities for teaching about our cultural heritage. Short units or projects based on any of them can form a solid basis for social studies programs.

Four suggestions:

1. Bring out the original meaning of the celebration so that the children grasp its significance. Good Friday often disappears under a welter of chocolate eggs and Easter bonnets. Anzac Day is seldom presented as part of a larger war, one which we shared with many allies.
2. Look for fiction to key into the special day and use as a lead-in and to set the mood, e.g. *Bread and Honey* for Anzac Day.
3. Share any ceremony or display with another class and/or parents and friends.
4. If you have pupils from other countries, look for special days in their culture that the class can celebrate. Encourage family participation in these.

BRIGHT IDEAS FOR THE YEAR

Getting to Know Them

Make an effort to get to know your pupils on an informal basis. Early in first term arrange a lunch date with each one. Friends may like to share or some children may prefer being part of a small group. Spend the time talking about their interests outside of school, their families and their learning likes and dislikes. Share some of your own feelings and ideas with them and invite suggestions about classroom organisation. One sure way to break the ice is to offer a small treat—health sweets, nuts, a bag of plums etc. Doesn't cost much, but quickly creates a feeling of warmth and trust.

Each Term—Hold a Reading Party!

1. Pick a date when it will suit to have your pupils read for a whole afternoon.
2. Send home a note explaining that the object is to prove to the kids that reading is important, while giving them the opportunity to practise those skills learned during reading exercises. Ask if on this day each child may bring to school—
   - ☐ One or two books or magazines to share.
   - ☐ A cushion or small piece of carpet (samples are often given away in stores).
3. Arrange to borrow a wide selection of books from the school or local library.
4. During lunch hour on the day, arrange all the desks in the centre of the room and pile them with books and magazines. Use the chairs, cushions and carpet squares to create reading nooks and corners. Blow up a few balloons to add to the party atmosphere, call in your 'guests' and settle down with them for an orgy of uninterrupted reading.
5. Twenty minutes before the bell, call everyone together while you read aloud a special story you've been saving for just such an occasion.

Use the Proverbs or Wise Sayings

Choose one or all of these suggestions . . .

☐ Each week set aside one of your oral language lessons for a discussion about the meaning of each proverb.

☐ Start a class 'Proverb Book'. Use a scrapbook with blank pages. Each week choose two volunteers —one to print the proverb in bright colours, the other to provide some form of illustration.

☐ Write the proverb on the chalkboard. Use it for the week's handwriting lesson.

☐ In art lessons, make small decorative posters featuring the proverbs. This would be good for group work, or when pupils are working in pairs.

☐ Build a file of proverbs to meet all occasions by categorising according to subject matter. Pupils can enter proverbs on cards as part of the handwriting or language lessons.

☐ Use for role playing. Marvellous opportunities here.

☐ Let the children choose a selection to use as a theme for a home-made calendar for Christmas or birthday presents.

☐ Design a large mural based on several of the class favourites and develop this as a continuing art project.

☐ Print on coloured cardboard and pin to school notice board. Pupils can take turns doing this.

New Year Resolutions

Make a list that includes (1) ideas you want to try out, and (2) ideas for changing old patterns. Why not write them out as promises to yourself, then put the list in a place where you will see it often—your Day Book, for instance, or beside the bathroom mirror at home? What kind of promises? Why not some like these:

I promise to . . .

☐ Read at least three professional books this year.

☐ Say something positive to each child every week.

☐ Read to the class EVERY DAY—without missing once.

☐ Visit two of the schools nearest to mine so as to swap notes and meet new colleagues.

☐ Try out a new idea once a week.

☐ Go out into the playground to talk with the kids at least once a month—on days I'm not on duty!

☐ Write notes to parents telling of something good that has happened to their child that day.

☐ Throw out programs or lesson plans I have found dull—and try teaching the material differently!

☐ Make sure I comment on the work each child is trying to do, approving the effort or thought, rather than just the answer.

☐ Run off copies of my autobiography and let interested children read it while I'm reading theirs.

☐ Get feedback from my pupils by discussing the past week each Friday afternoon and inviting suggestions for the upcoming week.

☐ Ask the class to help me plan a surprise birthday party for someone who needs a lift—the Principal, maybe—or a colleague or helpful parent.

☐ Try to keep my own reading up to date and subscribe to at least one overseas publication.

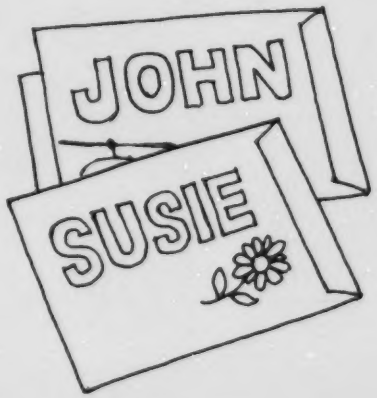
What About a Fishnet?
Ever used a fishnet in your classroom? Wonderfully easy way to add display space. Simply hang it lengthwise from ceiling to floor in a corner, or stretch it to cover a wall. Paper clips can be twisted into an S-shape to make hangers. Attach one end to the display item and hook on to the net. Puts an end to staples, tacks and sticky tape. Where do you get a net? Check in any sports department or ask the parents for help! There's probably a fisherman among them!

Tried a Camera?
Invest in an inexpensive camera and keep it loaded at all times. You'll find it adds an extra dimension to all classroom projects. Photograph class plays, field trips, art and science projects, class visitors etc. Seize opportunities to snap the kids at play and at work. Paste the photos into a class scrapbook, get the children to write the captions and place the book on display during parents visits in Education Week or end of year. With older groups, train the children to take photographs and use these occasionally as a stimulus for written work.

Art Corner Ideas
Set up a really efficient art corner. Use an old door on top of desks to make a worktable and arrange a selection of brushes, pencils, pens etc. in large non-tip jars. Transfer liquid paint to discarded plastic squeeze bottles; they are not only spill-proof, but make it easy to dispense small amounts of paint. Cover palettes or plates with Gladwrap before using, then peel off and dump at end of day. Saves messy washing up. If using easels, line paint trays with folded newspaper and replace as it becomes messy. Collect large cartons for storage of materials and stack beneath the table. Last tip: appoint art monitors whose job it is to keep everything clean and tidy.
N.B. Plastic squeeze bottles are wonderful as glue dispensers also!

CLASSROOM ORGANISATION

V.I.P. Lunches
Have a look at the way your pupils spend their lunch hour. Can you make it more personal by encouraging youngsters to sit and talk occasionally with classmates other than close friends? Why not invite some outside guests from time to time? ('Come-and-bring-a-sandwich' invitations.) Who? Consider parents, local business people, senior citizens, other members of staff, secondary school students. Perhaps a change of scenery would be good. Borrow a colleague's classroom and enjoy eating 'away from home', or explore the school grounds and nearby open space and take the kids along for a picnic lunch. If you join the children regularly with a storybook and list of games tucked in your pocket, you could be surprised at the improvement in class tone and the children's responsiveness.



The Personal Touch
How to keep the personal touch? First collect large business-size envelopes, one for each child in the class. Write a pupil's name on the back of each envelope and file alphabetically in a box. From time to time during the year, write a note to each child commenting when something is done well, or just saying thank you for a task accomplished. Compliments about good manners, helpfulness and cheerfulness are always welcome too. Put the note in the pupil's envelope and drop this into a desk tray. Each morning the class 'postie' can 'deliver the mail'. Make sure every pupil gets a letter during each term. And encourage pupils to 'use the postal service' by writing to one another and to you.

Tension Breakers

From time to time during each day introduce a 'tension breaker'. Children need a chance to stretch, to wriggle a little, even to giggle or laugh together. Then they'll return with more concentration to the task in hand. All of the following are guaranteed to produce a more relaxed classroom atmosphere. In each case say to the children:

- *Take three long, slow breaths—in and out to the count of eight.*
- *Stand up and try to shake your hands off your arms. Now shake each foot vigorously in turn.*
- *Put your head down on the desk. Shut your eyes. Imagine you are lying on the beach (or under a tree). Drift off to sleep. Wake and stretch when I count to three.*
- *Take a 'Smile Break'. Smile at the four people nearest to you. Then smile at me.*

Try them all. They work like a charm!

Key into TV

Invent a character (Katie Kangaroo? Claude Koala?) who is a TV addict, but one with discrimination! Draw, cartoon-style, cut out, and pin to bulletin board with the caption, *Katie (Claude) wouldn't miss these shows for anything!* Consult a weekly TV guide to find worthy programs you think your pupils would enjoy, but might miss. Look especially for wildlife series which tie in with classwork. Compile a list of suggestions, including the day of the program, its title, the station and the time, and pin this beneath the caption. Each morning ask who saw the program suggested and allow free discussion. Don't chide those who don't watch, but praise and enthuse with those who do.

STOP! And Use Some Road Signs

Borrow an idea from road signs. First ask pupils to look hard at these and note the ways in which they are presented. Suggest they find words to add so as to invent learning slogans or mottoes, e.g.

STOP *Learn your spelling!*

80 *new facts a term!* Learn them!

60 *is 6 x 10, 3 x 20, 5 x 12* etc.

Hand out large sheets of cardboard and get the children to duplicate colours and designs so their signs look authentic. Then add the extra words in small print. Hang around the room as decoration and inspiration.

Don't Do That!

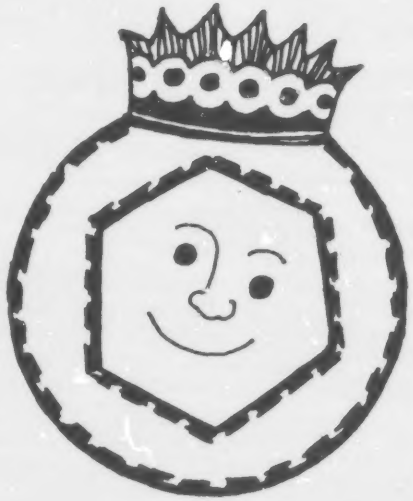
Check on pupils' understanding of school safety rules. Set them to work listing commonsense advice about not slamming doors, pushing or running on stairs, throwing hard or sharp articles, leaning out of high windows etc. Devise eye-catching posters which feature slogans such as *Hey! Don't Push!* and stick up in appropriate spots around the school.

A *Quiet, Please! Class at Work!* poster is a useful one to have ready for free reading or writing sessions.

End the exercise by reading these poems to the class: *Rebecca, the Girl Who Slammed Doors; John, Who Lost a Fortune by Throwing Stones* (both by Hilaire Belloc).

Plan a Party

Ask your pupils to help you plan a surprise Christmas or Thank You party for someone in the school who has been particularly helpful during the year: Principal, colleague, caretaker, parent or grandparent; maybe even an older student. Work out a simple menu with each child contributing one small item and send home a note asking if s/he may bring this instead of lunch on the party day. (Go for health foods and fruit as much as possible.) Invest in some balloons and paper hats to create a party atmosphere and involve the children in the arrangements. As a final touch, prepare a posy or buttonhole for the guest of honour.



5 IDEAS TO HELP DEVELOP ORAL SKILLS

Once Upon a Time . . .

Why did Jack steal from the giant?
Did the three little pigs need to kill the wolf?
Turn back to fairy stories and folk tales to ask questions like these. Have the children discuss what might have happened before the story started. Ask for new story endings or solutions. Can they find ways to defend the actions of the villain? Exciting written exercises can spring from such sessions.

'Coming in to Land!'

A good game to develop language and listening skills is *Control Tower*. Draw two lines on the floor about 3 m long and just over a metre apart. This is the runway of the airport. Within these lines, lay out an obstacle course, using books, wastepaper basket, articles of clothing etc. Now tell pupils that it is a very foggy night so each pilot will need to be 'talked in' and helped to make a safe landing. Call for two volunteers. The pupil who is the pilot is then set at the end of the runway and blindfolded. The other is the air traffic controller. It's his/her job to talk the pilot along the runway so s/he avoids all the obstacles. Remind the controller to think carefully before giving instructions. Should the pilot move to the right? The left? By how much? How many steps forward? When one pair finishes the course successfully, change the position of the obstacles and let another pair begin.

'What Did You Say?'

Remember what fun you had at kids' parties when you played the *Pass-it-on* game? Adapt this to the classroom as a lesson for developing listening skills. Here are two versions:

1. Show one pupil a simple message written on a piece of paper, then ask her/him to whisper the message to another pupil, who then passes it on in the same way. Continue around the room. Last one to receive the message writes it down and the two sentences are compared.

2. Send three or four children from the room while the rest of the class makes up a brief story. (This can take up to 15 minutes, so make sure the absentees have books to read.) When the story is ready, call one of the pupils back into the room. Ask him/her to listen carefully while a volunteer reads the story aloud. Tape-record the reading. Next step is to call in a second pupil and have the first tell that child the story as s/he heard it. (Record also.) Repeat the process for the other two. Last pupil is required to retell the story on tape only. Then play back all five stories so pupils can hear the variations and additions.

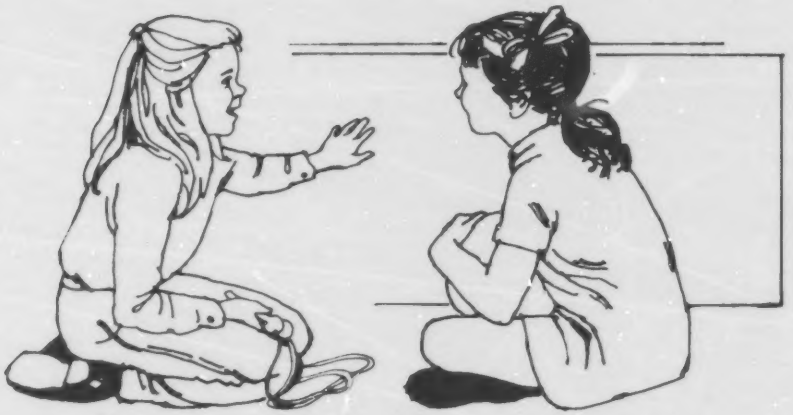
'Come and Buy!'

Organise a session in which each child pretends s/he is working in a bookshop and has to try to sell a book to the class. Remind them they must make it seem so interesting that everyone will want it.

'Um . . . er . . .'
Here's a game to encourage both vocabulary development and some fast thinking. Sit the children cross-legged, in a circle. One pupil, eyes shut, sits in the centre. Have them pass a bean-bag around the circle until the one in the centre calls 'Stop!' S/he then says any letter other than X. The pupil 'caught' with the bean-bag then passes it on and proceeds to say eight words that begin with the chosen letter, trying to finish before the bean-bag returns. If this pupil can't think of eight words s/he takes the place of the one in the centre and the game begins again. If s/he does manage it, the pupil in the centre must try again. Vary to suit whatever you are teaching, e.g. choose certain words ending in a particular letter, or use consonant blends, or include a certain vowel.

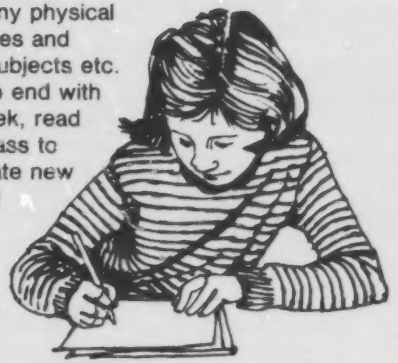
AND 1 FOR LISTENING

Why Not? . . . A Listening Skills Lesson
Set aside the last half hour on a Friday and play some Mozart records to your class. Don't try to do anything—just lie back and listen. Then drift home to a relaxed weekend.



TRY THESE SUGGESTIONS FOR CREATIVE WRITING

Guess Who?
Ask the children to write a story about themselves without mentioning their names or giving any physical description. Instead, they can tell about likes and dislikes, favourite foods, colours, school subjects etc. Tell them to write in the first person and to end with 'Who am I?' Each day, during the next week, read aloud several of the stories and ask the class to guess the writer. It's a good way to evaluate new pupils' writing ability and to help them (and you) get to know each other better.



Classroom Authors: Write-a-book!
Ideas to get them started . . . *Story Titles:* The Giant Meat Pie; It Happened on Anzac Day; There's a Bunyip in My Bed; The Kangaroos' Concert
Information Books: Rules for Backyard Cricket; Things to Do Instead of Watching TV; A Recipe Book for Kids; How to Get Along with Parents.
Before the end of the month hold a book sale and invite parents to drop in, browse and buy. Use the proceeds for paperbacks to stack the classroom library.

Write Me a Letter . . . Pupil-made Books
Start a writing exercise in which pupils write a series of letters, e.g. letters between a pet and its owner; letters of complaint from hands, feet etc. to their owner; letters I'd love to get or letters I'd love to write but don't dare; letters from one nursery rhyme character to another. Design covers shaped like envelopes, staple or bind, and add to the classroom library.

A Week in the Life of Sam/Sarah Smith

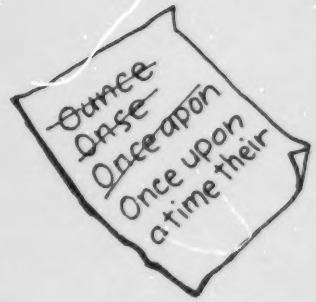
Use litho or cover paper to help each pupil make an 8-page book. The title and author's name go on the first page. In the middle of each following page pupils draw a large numeral—1, 2, 3 etc. up to 7. Block lettering is best as then the numeral can be decorated or filled in with solid colour. Start on a Tuesday with, *On Monday I . . .* and get them to write a brief account of all that happened the day before, fitting their writing or printing around the large numeral, using any layout they like. (Younger pupils can dictate this to a teacher or helper.) Brightly painted covers can be optional, depending on age level.

What Will We Write About?

Draw up a large chart with around 50 catchy titles and make this a month of story writing. Turn the best of these into books and either add them to the classroom library or donate to a younger class.

Some suggestions to get you started

I Don't Want to Hear!; My Secret Life; The Mysterious Man Next door; The Wrong Number; The Party That Went Wrong; Kitchen Full of Kids; Did You Hear What Happened to Mary?; Don't Just Stand There—Run!; My Mum, the Bushranger; Help! It's Got Me!



V.I.P.'s

Splurge on a couple of rolls of film and take a photo of each pupil in the class. Next, talk with the children about the kinds of questions reporters often ask celebrities, and draw up a list of your own. It could include questions such as: What words describe you best? What makes you angry/proud/unhappy etc.? Pupils then work in pairs, taking turns being writer and V.I.P. Share the children's writing with others by displaying both articles and photographs in a corridor, assembly hall or library, under a bold heading—VERY IMPORTANT PEOPLE!

A Cut-and-dried Story

Hand out five slips of paper to each child then dictate the following *sentence starters*—one to a slip.

I thought I saw a . . .
So I . . .
Then it . . .
That made me . . .
At last I . . .
Guess where I am now? I'm . . .

Suggest they put the strips in any order they like and then complete the sentences. With younger pupils this can be a group exercise. Older ones can use them to build a complete story—or book!

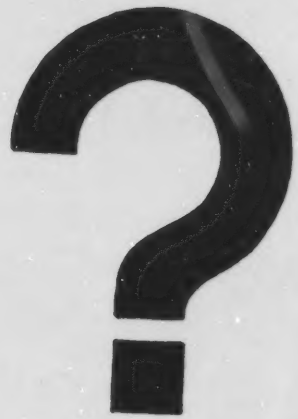
Did He Get an A?

What kind of a school report would Charles Sturt have got? Or Robert Burke? Set to work as a group and invent one for your favourite explorer, checking reference books for clues. Ask the kids what subjects they think he would have been good at. Would he have been energetic and always in trouble, or a quiet dreamer? (For example, Leichhardt would surely have got lost on school excursions!) Help them to arrive at comments that will show the kind of man he grew into. If they enjoy the exercise, turn them loose to invent more reports about other explorers or famous characters.

Pick a 'Story-Mate'

Set the children to work in pairs writing and illustrating stories about each other. Suggest they talk over plots, characters, settings, etc., and share any special talents or skills. Only one rule: the 'story-mate' must be the hero or heroine in the story each is writing. Turn into books and suggest they present to each other as Christmas gifts on the last day of term.

BACKGROUND TO LANGUAGE



1. The Full Stop

Share with your class this information from *Teacher*, March 1977 . . . The ancient Greeks put a small circle at the end of each sentence to signify that they had 'gone all around' the subject and that the idea expressed in the sentence was complete. Eventually, people became tired of drawing a circle and began using a small dot. In some countries this is called *period*—which developed from two words: *peri*, meaning 'round', and *hodos*, 'a way'. In most school dictionaries only the term *stop* is listed, not *full stop*. Odd, when you come to think of it!

2. Quotation Marks

When people first began writing they discovered they needed a way to designate words spoken by someone other than the writer. They began using two curved marks to represent the lips of the speaker. One part of the symbol was put at the beginning of the particular passage so that writer could indicate that what was to come was something someone else had said. The other half of the symbol was put at the end to show the writer had finished recording another's words.

3. The Question Mark

The mark designating a question was once written fully as the word *quaestro*. As time passed, people shortened this to *Qo* and the *o* inevitably became a hasty dot. Then the letters were written as a *Q* with the dot under it. As *Q* in the Roman alphabet looked like a 2 the question mark gradually became the symbol.

4. The Asterisk

This word is a combination of two Greek words—*asteer* meaning 'star' and *ikos* meaning 'little'. Easy for children to see that it looks just like a little star. It usually means that there is some added information further on or below.

5. The Comma

A simple derivation here. Our word *comma* comes from the Greek *komma* meaning *short phrase*, which in turn came from the word *keptein*—'to cut'. Telling pupils this makes it easier for them to understand that we use commas 'to cut' a sentence into short, easy to understand parts.

6. The Exclamation Mark

What a simple explanation! When the early Greeks were excited about something they often said *'Io'*. When scholars used this word in writing, they altered the *o* to a dot. Before long it was written as *I* with the dot under it.

PRACTICAL MATHS

Use up Old Calendars

Paste the pages of old calendars on to cardboard. At the bottom write directions such as:

- Add the dates of all the Mondays.
- Subtract the date of the first Sunday from the date of the fourth Tuesday.
- Multiply the sum of the dates of each day in the third week by five.
- Divide 2,500 by the sum of the even days in the month.

Write the answers on the back of the card for easy checking and use for extension work.

'Half a Pound of Tuppenny Rice'

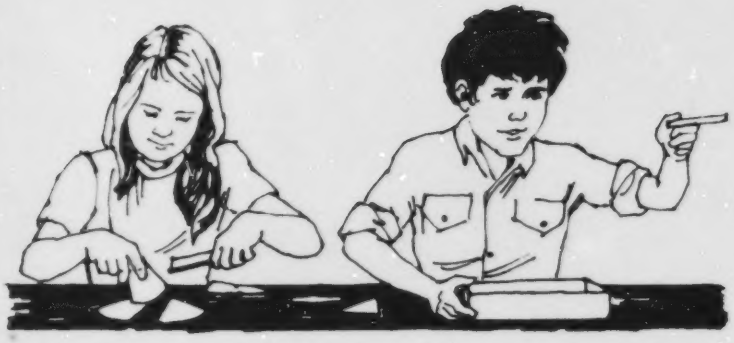
Key into food measurement units by having your pupils make survey charts recording information about basic food items such as bread, milk, salt, flour, meat etc. Follow up by getting them to weigh or measure separate items in their lunches and record these also. Discuss which items are measured in grams and kilograms and which in litres, and examine the differences.

What'll I Buy?

Weekly food circulars put out by some stores contain a wealth of information and are especially good for work on fractions, measurements, weight etc., as well as money. If you can't lay your hands on some of these, collect pages featuring food advertisements from newspapers. Tell your pupils they have, say, $25 to spend on groceries and set them to work compiling lists. Make sure they add all the purchases and subtract the total from their original $25 before finishing. Lead on to ask such questions as: *But what will you pay if you only want 1 apple? How many pizzas should you buy if there are six people in the family and you want each person to have a quarter of a pizza? How much will the piece left over weigh?*

What's for Breakfast?

Call in all those empty cereal packages from your pupils' breakfast tables. You'll find a mass of mathematical information printed on them. Many brands list calories per helping as well as offering break-downs of nutrients contained in the product. There are recipes as well. Set the children to work calculating how much iron, calcium, riboflavin etc. they will absorb over a given period. Suggest they invent other problems using the data provided.



Who Likes Pizza?

Frozen pizza cartons are excellent for lessons on fractions. Ask pupils to collect these from home and cut out the illustrations of the pizzas. When you have a selection, divide each into different sized slices—either halves, quarters, eighths, thirds or sixths. Write the fractional value of each piece on the back. Jumble in a box and set a Maths group to work sorting the slices into whole pizzas. Have the children record the activity in number sentences, then suggest they write poems about pizza-eating people.

How Many Beans in a Jar?

Once favourite guessing game at church fetes or bazaars, this is still a good way to teach estimation of numbers. All you need is a glass coffee jar and you're in business. Each week pick two children to organise the competition. Their job is to load the jar, then get each pupil to make a guess, which is carefully noted. On Friday afternoon the jar is opened and the beans counted before witnesses. The pupil whose guess comes closest wins. Prize? A large, bright cardboard medal saying *Champion Guesser of the Week*.

Snakes and Ladders: Who's the Champion?

The longest recorded game of snakes and ladders (up till 1978) was one which lasted 204 hours—from 15-23 June 1976. Where? At Baulkham Hills High School, N.S.W. Why not set up a snakes and ladders competition as one of the maths projects? Play off until you get a champion. Present a certificate which states the winner is the Snakes and Ladders Champion of the class.

How Far to the Moon?

Set the class to work making bar graphs of the relative distances between earth and the sun, moon and planets. Talk about light years and investigate the role of computers in space technology. Begin a class story in which you all travel to a distant planet, and make daily calculations of speed, time, distance etc. a part of the exercise.

How Did They Get Across? . . . Maths Puzzle

Give Maths an occasional fun approach (and help to develop logical reasoning) by providing simple puzzles. Write the problem on the chalkboard and set a time limit for solving. If the children find it difficult, encourage discussion and 'brainstorming' sessions. What kind of puzzle? Start with this: A father and his two children are trying to get across a river in a small boat that holds only 68 kg at a time. The father weighs 68 kg, his daughter weighs 36 kg and his son weighs 32 kg. How can all get across the river? (Not necessarily at the same time.) *Answer:* The children go across first. The boy brings the boat back. Then the father goes across and the girl returns the boat. Finally, the two children go across together.

Christmas Budgets

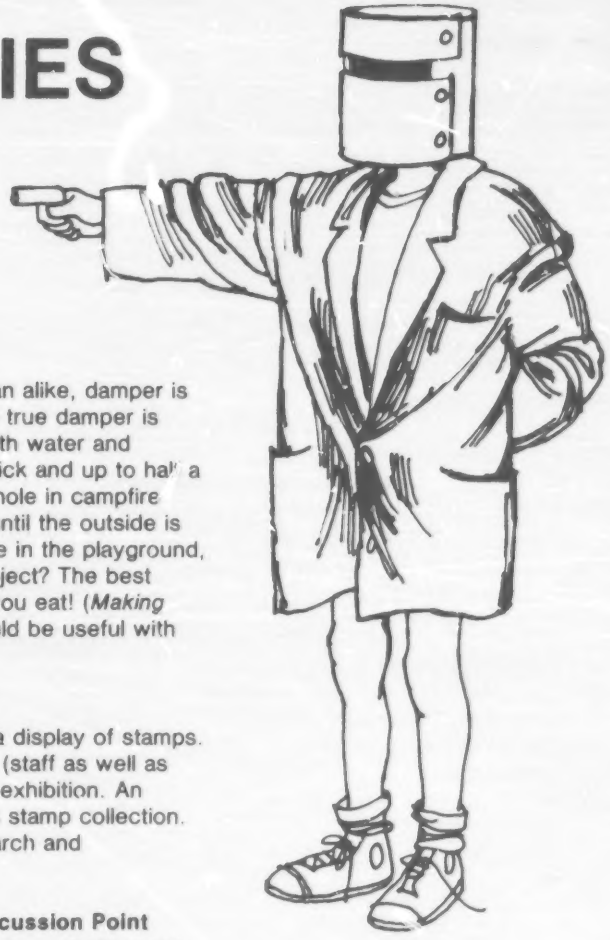
Devise problems which lead into the ways and means of making the Christmas spending money go further. Collect prices of shop-bought cards and presents popular with your pupils' age group and help them work out how much more money they'll have if they make their own cards, gifts, toys, wrapping paper etc. Other problems can be set around Christmas recipes and family holidays.

PRACTICAL SOCIAL STUDIES

How Far Is It?
Obviously a good explorer is one who can follow a map—or make up his/her own. How familiar with maps are your pupils? Send out a plea for old street directories and encourage the children to hunt for their own streets and any others near the school. From there move to a road atlas and set groups to work planning routes to and from neighbouring towns and cities. After they've worked out the approximate distances, set them to work calculating cost when travelling in (a) a small car and/or motorbike, (b) large family car, (c) a bus. If there's a railway connection, an interesting exercise would be to contrast the rail fare with the cost of petrol and maintenance of a vehicle.

Boiling the Billy
Many children have never experienced lighting a fire in the open and boiling a billy. Can you set up a traditional campfire in the playground? Marvellous opportunity for lessons on bushcraft and conservation. Remember to put a twig across the billy's open mouth (traditionalists say it stops the water tasting smoky) and as soon as the water is boiling throw in several generous spoonfuls of tea. Then take the handle and quickly turn the billy round several times so that the leaves are sent to the bottom. While you all enjoy your 'cuppa' share a little history with the kids.

Historians aren't sure about the derivation of the word. It may be a shortened form of the old Scottish word 'billypot', or it could be an adaptation of the Aboriginal word *billa* which means water or river. Another suggestion is that it came from *boeuf bouilli*, a label on meat tins used as billies. It came into use around 1850 when the billy superseded the quart pot.



Making Damper
Staple diet of explorer and bushman alike, damper is as Australian as the kangaroo. The true damper is made of plain wheat flour mixed with water and kneaded into a flat cake 6-7 cm thick and up to half a metre in diameter. It's placed in a hole in campfire ashes, covered over and cooked until the outside is crisp. If you can arrange a campfire in the playground, why not make some as a class project? The best experiments are always the ones you eat! (*Making Damper* by P. Edwards (Reed) could be useful with younger classes.)

By Gum—I'm Stuck!
Continue the theme by setting up a display of stamps. Ask for help from stamp collectors (staff as well as pupils) and organise an interesting exhibition. An extension would be to start a class stamp collection. Wonderful way to encourage research and cataloguing skills!

Where Were All the Women? Discussion Point
Why were there so few women explorers? What did the wives, sweethearts, sisters of these famous explorers do while the men were off on their expeditions? What kinds of lives did women live during this period in history? Help the class to explore thoughts about customs, dress, social conditions etc. Talk about those of the explorers who had children. Who looked after the family while Dad was off adventuring? A good research project would be to find out how many of the explorers had children who also became famous.

PRACTICAL SCIENCE

A Load of Rubbish

Children talk glibly of pollution without applying it to the simple problem of littering. Sheet home the message by finding out how much rubbish is accumulated each day in the school. Explain to staff and principal the nature of your project and arrange to line the school garbage bins with plastic liners at the beginning of the day. These can then be lifted out and weighed on a balance scale or bathroom scales at the end of the afternoon. Collect waste-paper baskets from each room and weigh their contents also. Using these figures as a basis for calculation, the children can then work out the approximate weight of rubbish discarded in the school each week and over a whole year. From here lead into discussion about the effects of all this reject material on the environment and on methods of disposal. A visit to the local dump could be a useful follow-up activity.

Look What's Happening!

Take half a dozen sticks of celery (complete with leaves) and place in glasses filled with water that has been coloured red. (Use vegetable dye.) Place around the room. Ask pupils to record what happens during the day. As the dye starts to move up the stalks and into the leaves, encourage discussion about how and why this is happening.

Test a Proverb

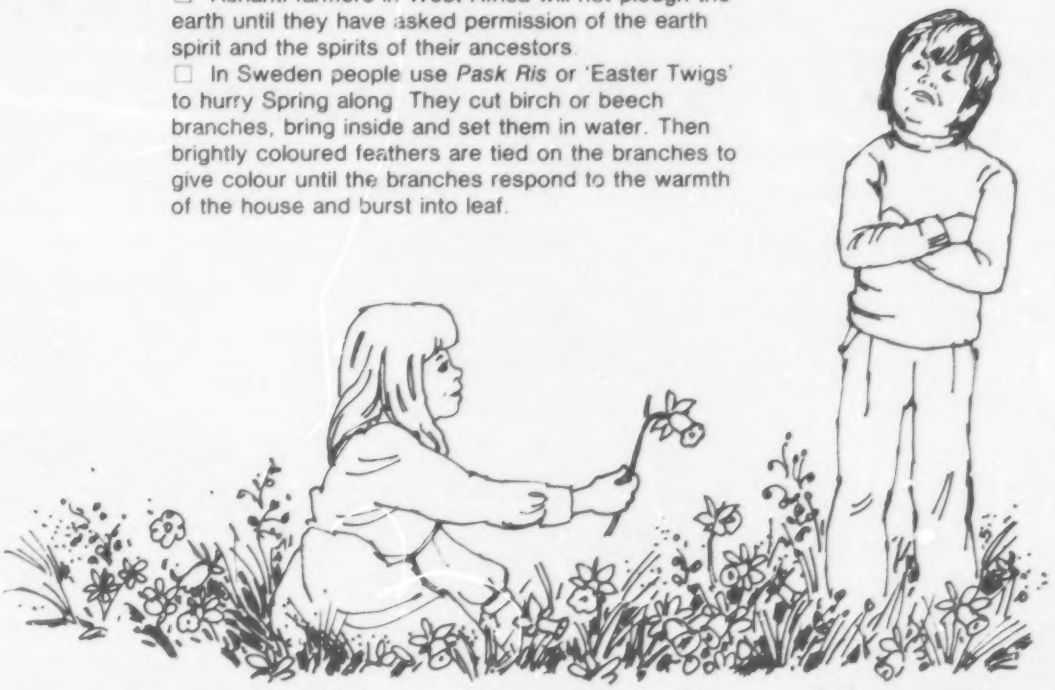
Do empty vessels make the most noise? Set up an experiment to prove the truth of this saying. Gather together a selection of wooden, glass, and plastic containers in a variety of shapes and sizes. Experiment by filling with sand and water and tapping with rulers and pencils. Country schools with water tanks could capitalise on these to show how sound indicates depth of water.

Spring Project

Begin by reading the legend of Demeter's search for Persephone. Talk about seeds and grain and ask pupils to bring in as many different seeds as can be found at home, e.g. orange, grapefruit and apple pips; wheat, barley, dried peas and beans; pumpkin and marrow seeds etc. Germinate as many of these as possible on pieces of wet cotton and keep records of what happens. Plant bulbs also and chart rates of growth, length of flowering time etc. (N.B. Remember to record in photographs as well as in writing.) Study the significance of Spring in other countries and cultures.

Two items to share:

- ☐ Ashanti farmers in West Africa will not plough the earth until they have asked permission of the earth spirit and the spirits of their ancestors.
- ☐ In Sweden people use *Pask Ris* or 'Easter Twigs' to hurry Spring along. They cut birch or beech branches, bring inside and set them in water. Then brightly coloured feathers are tied on the branches to give colour until the branches respond to the warmth of the house and burst into leaf.



What Makes the Noise?

Is there a piano in the school? Open it up by removing the front panels and let the children gaze at the complex system of strings and hammers. Let them gently touch. Ask them to estimate how many strings the piano has. Press a key and, after the hammer strikes the strings, ask them to describe what they saw. Ask what happens when the key is released. Let one child press one key at a time while others point out which string is hit. In this way explore what happens when either of the pedals is pressed and experiment by stroking the strings and comparing the sounds made by the longer ones with those of the shorter. Have you a music-teacher or piano-tuner friend who would explain the names and functions of the various parts of the piano and perhaps give a demonstration or recital to finish the lesson?

'I'm Soaked!'

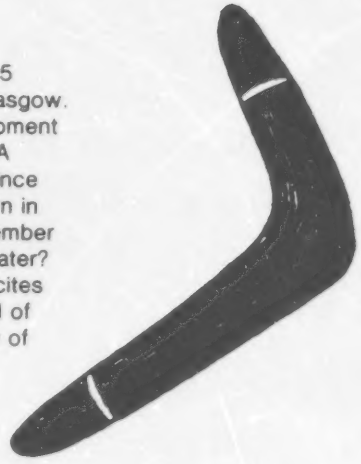
A rainy day would be a good one on which to set up this experiment. Start the morning by suggesting the children collect articles that can be soaked in water: scraps of felt from the art corner, a piece of paper, a wooden ruler, a handkerchief, that unclaimed sand shoe etc. When all are thoroughly wet, put them where they won't be touched. Ask your pupils to predict the order in which they think the articles will dry and to state why. Make periodic checks to find out which one does dry first, which second, and so on. Note the time each one takes. How close did the children come in their predictions? Repeat the experiment on a fine day and place the articles outside in the sun. Have the children note any differences in drying times and help them to determine reasons and so develop an hypothesis about evaporation.

Which Bone Is That?

Skeletons fascinate children. Ask your nearest High School science department if you can borrow a skeleton. Or try the local hospital or St John Ambulance Association. If this doesn't work, find a large clear chart which shows all the bones. Help the children pick out all the main bones and teach the names of these. Finish with an adaptation of 'Simon says', e.g. Simon says, 'Touch your *femur*'.

Onion-peeling Record

The record in 1976 was 19.05 kg peeled in 45 minutes. It was set by Cameron Simpson of Glasgow. Don't attempt to better this, but do snatch a moment or two to talk about this interesting vegetable. A native of western Asia, it has been cultivated since early times—for instance, we know it was grown in Egypt nearly 4000 years ago. A bulb, it's a member of the lily family. Why does it make our eyes water? Apparently onions give off something which excites the ends of the nerves of smell in the nose and of touch in the eyeball and eyelids. The rapid flow of tears helps to protect the eyeball.



First Australian Invention

Have a look at the returning boomerang. The non-returning kind was known in several countries, but a boomerang that came back seems to have been solely the invention of Australian Aborigines. Discuss the ingenuity that went into its invention and invite comment as to how and why it evolved. If you can, find an expert to give a demonstration. World championships and rules were set up in 1970. Details about these are in the *Guinness Book of Records*.

A HANDFUL OF ART IDEAS

Hand-made Cards . . . Art and Craft
Lead on to art work by making cards in the classroom and bring in old cards to act as inspirations in design. Introduce:

- *Printmaking*, using a variety of media, e.g. fruit and vegetables (cauliflower, mushroom, slices of lemon, orange etc., as well as the more usual potato); styrofoam blocks, linoleum, corks, sponge rubber, leaves etc.
- *Screen Printing*, of an official class card, using a design chosen and developed by the children. Use it to convey your thanks and Christmas wishes to all helpers and class friends. Special hint: recycle old art work by using it as wrapping paper or in Christmas collage designs.

'Change Your Face' . . . Art and Group Dynamics
Proclaim a 'Be-someone-different day' so as to give everyone a mid-term 'lift'. Collect suitable art material and set children to work at 9 am creating false moustaches, beards, wigs, eyebrows etc. Don't be sexist—encourage girls to wear moustaches and beards if they wish and urge the boys to try plaits or ringlets just for fun. Let the children wear their 'disguises' for the whole day before taking them home to share with the family. Don't forget to load the camera, and remember to change your own appearance too.

What's in a Name? . . . Art Project
Make a mural using pupils' names. Place a large sheet of paper on a work table on the floor and ask each child to print or write his or her name in large letters. Then ask each to choose someone else's name to outline in colour. Decorate the spaces between the names with flowers, stars, animals or funny faces. Hang the finished mural on a classroom wall.
Texta colours used on a cheap cotton fabric will give a permanent class banner.

Sewing and Art Combined
Send an S.O.S. home for buttons of all shapes and sizes, scraps of fabric, felt and wool. You'll also need glue, felt-tipped pens, scissors and squares of cotton fabric or hessian. Get the children to draw rough sketches of flowers on the fabric squares. Then show them how to sew a button in the centre of each flower. Next cut out petals, leaves and stems from the fabric scraps and glue these in the appropriate places. Left-over wool can be used to add embroidery touches, if wanted.

Paper Parasols . . . Craft Idea
Suggest a festival of parasols in honour of Athena and the month of May. Make miniature parasols from cardboard and decorate, Japanese fashion, with bold flowers, butterflies and beetles. Hang from fishing line run diagonally across the room well above head height. (While about it, explain that the word comes from the Latin *para*, meaning against or protection from, *sole*, meaning sun.)

Look for a large bare tree branch (visit a tip for tree loppings if you haven't a garden) and fix it firmly into a bucket, using bricks and sand. Each month change the display on it by using the ideas suggested or originating your own.

THE CLASSROOM TREE

A YEAR-LONG ART PROJECT

February

This month spend an art lesson making heart-shaped leaves in all shades of green, from pale lime to deep olive. Younger children can cut out and paint one large leaf each, older pupils could easily make several smaller ones. Attach with cotton or coloured wool. On Valentine's Day add bright red hearts.

March

Sure and what else but emerald-green shamrocks? These look specially elegant if you can afford green metallic paper or cardboard with a metallic finish. Make a ceremony of tying them to the tree on 17 March. What about a leprechaun to sit under the tree? Look for an illustration of one and get the best artist in the class to make a cardboard copy complete with cotton wool or pot scrub beard. You could add a pot of gold too!

April — Easter Special

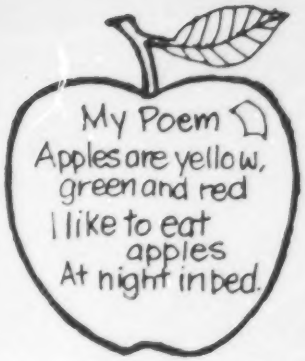
Hand out egg-shaped pieces of cardboard for the children to decorate with paint, wool, braid, sequins etc. Older pupils may like to follow the old English custom of writing messages on their eggs. Use coloured ribbon or cord to hang to the tree.

May

Almost through autumn, so it's time for autumn leaves. Choose a different shape from the one you used in February and break out in a profusion of yellow, red and orange. Remember to include the occasional dark green leaf to give balance and accent. Next consider some nuts in several shades of brown. Cotton-wool balls bound tightly with wool or clusters of wooden beads look well. Give the final touch by adding a pair of cardboard birds. Make their backs and wings brown and give them bright red breasts.

June

This month decorate the tree with small red and green apples. Make from papier-mache, first crumpling newspaper into rough balls or apple shapes. Cover these with thin strips of butcher's paper or newsprint which have been soaked in paste. Use only enough to cover and mould. A good finish can be got by painting the dry shapes with a thin solution of Spackle (can be bought in hardware shops). However, with younger classes this step can be skipped. Paint the dry apples bright scarlet or apple green (what else?). A final coat of clear varnish gives real polish!



July

Link up with *Charlotte's Web* and decorate the tree with spiders. Here's a simple and effective pattern—take four pipe cleaners (coloured if you can get them) and arrange across each other so they resemble the spokes of a wheel. Place a cotton-wool ball either side of the centre point. Holding these firmly, cover them with coloured wool, winding in and around the pipe cleaners. This makes the spider's body. Now bend each 'spoke' down and then out to form the spider's legs. Good colour combinations—orange or yellow bodies with black legs; green or purple with yellow, red, black or blue with white. French-knot eyes can add a delicious extra.

August

This month have a 'people tree'. Hand out small cardboard circles or ovals which pupils then turn into replicas of their own faces. Scraps of wool for hair can be glued on before hanging the faces on the tree. They'll provide a good talking point for Education Week when parents try to recognise their offspring. Don't forget to do one yourself.

September

Springtime means blossom time, so make some flowers. Hand out small circles of white cardboard about 5 cm in diameter. On each one make a single cut, from edge to centre. Using crimson red, white and black paint mix a range of tints and shades from palest shell-pink to deep purple, remembering always to add the red to the white and the black to the red. Paint the circles in these colours, sliding two together to form a blossom. Use red or white cotton to hang on the tree.

October

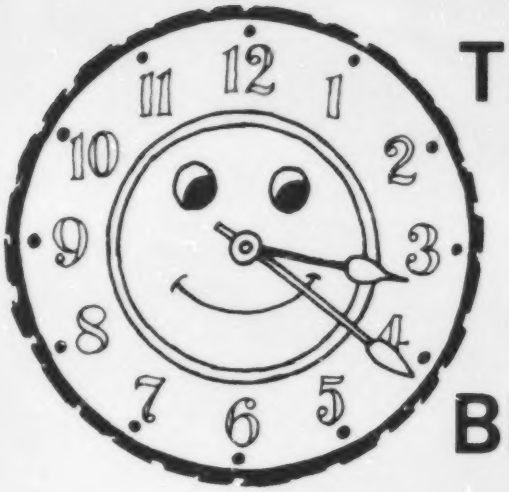
Silver raindrops for October! Show the class how to draw a simple raindrop shape and then cut these from aluminium foil which has been folded over several times to give weight. Use a small needle to thread white cotton to the hanging end. Vary the design on the tree, giving some twigs a single raindrop only, while others carry three or four hung from each other, mobile-style.

November

First step towards Christmas. Draw simple candle and flame shapes, cut out and paint both sides. Good colour combinations: red or green with yellow; white or orange with red; pink or blue with red. Thread cotton through tip of the flame and tie to the tree.

December

Leave the candles on the tree and add stars made from silver cardboard or aluminium foil. Last day of term put a present for each pupil under the tree. Suggestions: one small iced cupcake, an orange, a brand new rubber or pencil for next year, a book mark . . . or, if you'd prefer, a basket full of nuts and raisins or health sweets to be handed round and shared in the last few minutes of term.



TEN MINUTES BEFORE THE BELL!

Never waste those last few minutes in a disorganised muddle of packing-up-and-putting-away. Early in the year establish a pattern whereby if the kids move fast when told to get ready to go home, then you'll let them spend the last 10 minutes listening to a story or poem or playing some kind of game. (A learning one, of course.)

☐ **First suggestion:** Brush up on some old word games. Why not start with *I spy* . . .

☐ **Why not play *Buzz***, and sharpen up tables and addition skills at the same time? Remember the rules? First player says *one*, the second says *two* and so on. But the player whose turn it is to say *seven* must say *buzz*. In the same way *buzz* is used in every number which contains *seven* or any multiple of seven, e.g. 7, 14, 21, 27, 28, 35, 42, 47 etc. In the same way you can play *Fizz* by substituting this for 5 or multiples of 5.

Real experts claim they can combine both in the same game! Speed is vital, so keep a tally as to how far you get each time before the bell rings—and keep trying to better your score.

☐ **What's a sick crocodile?**
Make a Riddle Box. Set pupils to work collecting and writing down their favourite riddles and jokes (only perfect handwriting, please!) and get them to drop these in the box. This helps to absorb their time if they're quick workers in some subjects. Then, when the box is full, spend the last ten minutes of the day sharing the collection with the class.
P.S. The answer? *An illigator.*

☐ **Take a deep breath and start chanting—**
Two cents, four cents, six cents, a dollar,
If you can spell Melbourne
stand up and holler—
You can either point to a pupil or let the first up call out the answer. (More fun that way!) Ring the changes till they can spell the names of all capital cities and States. Then move into names of explorers, rivers, deserts etc. (Idea adapted from rhyme given in *The Teacher's Desk Companion*, Macmillan.)

☐ **Here's a good action game.** The words are sung to the tune *Tavern in the Town*, with pupils touching each body part with both hands as it is named.

Head, shoulders, knees and toes,
Knees and toes,
Head, shoulders, knees and toes
Knees and toes, and
Eyes and ears and mouth and nose,
Head, shoulders, knees and toes,
Knees and toes!

Increase the pace each time through.

☐ **Time for a story?** Of course. Look for Leila Berg's *Folk Tales* (Piccolo). The contents page gives length of reading time beside each title. Perfect for younger children. With older groups use items from *Reader's Digest* and other magazines.

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☐ **Brush up on listening skills** by playing the memory game. One pupil starts off with: *I'm going to New Zealand* (or England or Japan etc.) *and I'm going to take my ball.* The next pupil will say, *I'm going to New Zealand and I'm going to take my ball and an apple.* The third pupil must remember what has been said before and add on another object and so on. Any item can be chosen, of course. Pointing or throwing a beanbag to select the next player can help keep the class on its toes.

☐ **Play *How Old Are You?*** Here's the formula:

Write down your age.
Multiply it by 3.
Add 1.
Multiply the answer by 3.
Add your age again.
Cross off the last figure on the right and there's your age!

Works like a charm!

☐ **Launch into an exciting beginning to a story**—e.g. *I turned suddenly and there behind me was . . .* Point to a pupil. S/he must complete the sentence, then point to another who has to pick up the thread of the story with a second sentence. The story moves from one to another, round the class. Whoever is caught when the bell goes must 'wrap it up' by providing a conclusion. Other starters to use—
Who was that knocking on the door at midnight?
Sick with fear, I put out my hand to take the . . .
Last night I met the ghost of . . .

☐ **Have a sing-song.** Look for an old-fashioned song book and brush up on the words of some of the old favourites sung round campfires and in buses. Three to start with—

She'll be comin' round the mountain
Nick nack paddy wack
There's a hole in the bucket

☐ End each December day with a **Christmas carol**.

USING MUSIC

☐ **Let's Dance! . . . Language, Movement, Music**
Ask the children to bring a large, brightly coloured scarf from home. Select a number of records or tapes so you have a variety of fast and slow rhythms. Either move to a hall or clear the room so there is plenty of space. (A radio program will fill the gap if nothing else is available.) First ask the children to explore all the things they can do with their scarves while standing in one place. Talk about *over* and *under, around* and *through*; about *high* and *low*; about keeping *to the beat*. Emphasise wide, free movement so they cover as much space in the room as possible. You'll all enjoy the beautiful patterns created by the moving scarves.

☐ **Swing into Writing: 'With a One, Two, Three . . .'**
Need to brush up on *handwriting* skills? Try writing to music. Select happy, flowing tunes and encourage the kids to 'tune in' to the mood.

☐ **'The Farmer's in the Dell' . . . Music and Movement**
How long since you played this with your pupils? Often the old traditional games and jingles are overlooked because teachers think them 'old hat', yet they are brand new to each fresh crop of youngsters. Today's video kids often miss out because of this. Brush up also on *Oranges and Lemons* and *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*.

☐ **A Rousing End to Any Day**
How long since you taught the children some musical **rounds**? Try *Three Blind Mice* and *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* for a rousing end to any day.

EASY EXCURSIONS

Tour of the School Grounds

No expense, no long trip, but lots to learn!

Questions to ask:

- ☐ Whose job is it to look after the grounds?
- ☐ Who cuts the grass, if any?
- ☐ What are the names of any trees or plants?
- ☐ Who is responsible for looking after fences?
- ☐ Who pays for repairs around the school?
- ☐ Who collects the garbage? Where does it go?
- ☐ Asphalt or concrete areas—how are they laid?

Is there a caretaker or handyman who would agree to be interviewed? If not, will the principal help out? Write up the class report, titled 'Did you know?' Duplicate it and deliver to every classroom.

Visit Another Class

Liaise with a colleague, pick a day, and organise an official visit. Arrange to share a special art display, a science activity, a dramatic performance etc., with both hosts and guests participating. Pair off the children so each has the opportunity to make a new friend and arrange a picnic lunch in a spot different from the usual eating place. (Why not the local park if within walking distance?) Finish the visit with a story-telling session and a group sing-along. Insist on individual thank-you notes as a follow-up and add an invitation for a return visit next term.

Visit a Post Box

Get each child to write a letter to her or himself. Address and stamp these, then set off for the nearest post box. Check collection times and try to time your visit to coincide with one of these. (Ask at local P.O. for details.) What happens to the letters after this? Help the kids to find out. How long will it take for the letters to return? Dip into the history of postal deliveries, stamps etc. (and possibly mail-sorters' strikes) while waiting.

Walk Through Yellow Pages

Send out an S.O.S. to parents for old Yellow Page Directories. Pick areas to survey and make up questions such as: How many ice cream vendors are there in our area? Where is the nearest ice skating rink? Where could we go to buy a flag-pole? How many city and/or suburban post offices are there? Set the children to work in groups collecting and collating information. You may need to provide two or three street directories so that pupils can check addresses or suburbs.

Take a Book to the Centre

Set up an Outdoor Reading Centre. Is there a sunny or sheltered spot not too far from the classroom that you could commandeer? (Especially good if you can find one that can be seen from the classroom windows.) Use an old rug or groundsheet and cushions to make it comfortable. Volunteers can take turns in setting up and dismantling each day. Roster reading groups for a time-slot when they may 'take a trip to the Reading Centre'. Keep the rules simple—*'Read quietly or come back inside!'*, but don't frown on a little sharing or simple daydreaming.

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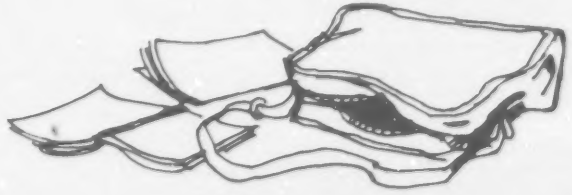

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'Men at Work'
When travelling to and from school, keep your eyes open for anything interesting happening nearby. For example, are there any roadworks under way? Are workmen trimming trees, painting a house, mending or installing traffic lights? If the children can stand in an out-of-the-way position and watch, organise an instant field trip. Many words can be added to your pupils' vocabularies as you discuss the work with them. Perhaps a member of the work team would explain the job to the children or even agree to be a classroom visitor—possibly during a lunch break. Follow up with stories or projects that relate to the activity and don't forget a joint letter of thanks for any help given.

Visit a School Friend
Pick someone for the class to visit and interview. Who? Librarian, Tuckshop Organiser, Special-Subject Teacher, Principal, President of the parent organisation—take your pick! Arrange for the children to visit their 'friend' in his/her area of work. Prepare beforehand questions pupils would like to ask, suggesting ones about what the job involves, things s/he likes or dislikes about it, and whether interesting equipment or materials can be demonstrated. Write up the interview and send a copy (together with a thank-you letter) to your obliging V.I.P.

A Colour Walk
Talk about colours, man-made and in nature, then set off with pads and pencils for a walk around the block. Write down all the different colours you see. Back in class, set to work categorising into primary and secondary colours. Extend into an art lesson by starting with red, yellow and blue paint and seeing how many different colours can be mixed from these. Add black and white to develop a concept of tints and shades.

Take a 'Sound' Walk
Pick a route—round the block, to the park or shopping centre and back, etc. Ask the children to concentrate on sounds they hear. Pause at appropriate spots to record discoveries of younger pupils or to allow time for the older ones to note these for themselves. On your return, categorise all the sounds noted and build on this vocabulary by using it for spelling lists, in written exercises and in social science discussions.

A Shadow Walk
Choose a bright sunny day and take a walk around the school grounds observing shadows. Help pupils to discover the relationship between the direction of the sun and the location of the shadow. Begin observation books recording discoveries. Then make a similar trip outside on a dull, cloudy day and invite comparisons. Continue observations and discoveries throughout the year.

'Here Come the Carol Singers!'
All children love the experience of being carol singers. Check with the rest of the staff and arrange for visits in the last week of term. Form groups of 10-12 pupils, decide which group will sing at each level, and pick two or three suitable carols. Recorders and guitars will help with the general effect, but don't worry if this isn't possible. If classes are able to offer a small donation, use money collected to buy a toy or book for the nearest Children's Home. If not, do it just for the love of Christmas.

ACTIVITIES FOR SPECIAL DAYS

VALENTINE'S DAY

Be My Valentine: Craft Work

Here's how—try this yourself, then show your pupils. Draw simple leaf and flower shapes (daisies are best) on a small piece of litho or cartridge paper. Now glue to another piece of paper the same size. Cut out the flowers and leaves while the paper's still soft and soggy and twist and bend the leaves and petals so they stand up. While they're drying, cover a cardboard heart with red fabric (any kind, though felt is good because it doesn't fray). Later glue your white flowers, etc., to it, adding curved stems if you like. Lastly glue the finished heart to a slightly larger heart-shaped piece of white cardboard. Scallop the edge if you feel up to it, otherwise leave it plain. Pupils can write a Valentine message on the back. Personal deliveries are always best!

EASTER

Special Project—For the Nimble Fingered Only!

Use real egg shells. Points to remember when blowing the eggs:

1. Use a large needle.
2. Make one hole quite large (up to 6 mm in diameter). Keep the other small, simply working needle in and out.
3. Blow in to the tiny hole so the contents come out the large one.

Decorate the eggs, using felt pens or vegetable dye.

To thread for hanging, use a needle longer than the egg, in one hole and out the other. The knot should slide through the large hole and lodge inside, but for extra security add a dab of glue or cellotape.

P.S. Better plan on scrambled eggs all round for lunch!

ST PATRICK'S DAY

What'll We Do?

A selection of suggestions to choose from:

☐ Find someone to demonstrate the Irish jig.

☐ Learn to sing an Irish song (*McNamara's Band, Molly Malone, Galway Bay*) or celebrate the Australian way by tackling the folk song *Ireland Over Here*. (It's in Ron Edwards' *Australian Folk Songs*, Rigby.)

☐ Make up some lime-flavoured jelly, turning the measuring and stirring into a combined maths/science lesson. (Why *does* it set?) If you can get club-shaped biscuit cutters, use them to make **jellied shamrocks.** Listen to a record of Irish music while you eat.

☐ Read some Irish stories. Start with the great heroes—Cuchulainn and Finn MacCool and then move on to leprechauns and the pot of gold. Rosemary Sutcliff's *The Hound of Ulster* (Dutton) and *The High Deeds of Finn MacCool* (Puffin) are good source material.

Easter Parade . . . Art Project

Ask each pupil to bring one hard-boiled egg from home. Collect also cardboard tubes from inside plastic wrap or aluminium foil rolls. Bring out your boxes of scraps of paper, wool, felt, fabric etc., and any buttons left over from last month's art lesson. As well, you'll want felt-tipped pens, paste and scissors. While the children draw faces on their eggs, cut the tubes into segments of varying sizes—anything between 10 cm and 15 cm. Next step is for them to add (wool) hair and paper or cardboard hats to their egg people. Hand out the tube sections for them to decorate with the paper and fabric scraps and suggest uniforms as well as dresses, shirts and pants etc. Felt arms, hands, ears and noses can all be glued on to both head and body. Last step is to place the head on top of the tube and complete the egg person. Set up an Easter parade of your characters and share with a neighbouring class.

APRIL FOOLS' DAY

One legend has it that April Fools' Day commemorates the fruitless mission of the dove from Noah's Ark. Hence the practice of sending people on foolish or fruitless errands. Generally it has been regarded as a day when the normal is suspended or even overturned. Why not suggest the girls and boys in the class swap roles for the morning? After lunch sit down and discuss any problems and rewards discovered during the process and lead into an awareness of sex roles and sex discrimination as practised at school and home.

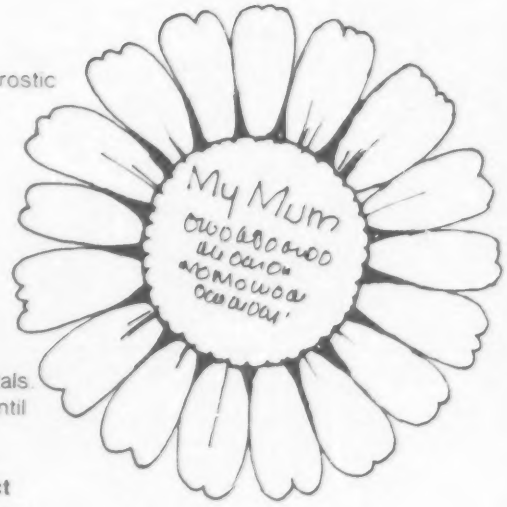
MAY DAY

Invent Your Own Festival

What to do? Try some of the following:

- Start the day by playing 'Nuts in May'. Even older children enjoy being reminded of old rhymes and kindergarten games. Lead from here into discussion and research into old English customs. *Why nuts in May in the northern hemisphere?*
- Elect a Queen of the May and let her choose the story for the daily reading. A chapter from Susan Cooper's *Greenwitch* (Puffin) would go down well with 5th and 6th class.
- Make a class mural. Print the word MAY in enormous block letters on a huge sheet of paper. Provide a pile of old magazines and set the kids to work cutting out pictures of anything appropriate—apples, autumn leaves, footballers etc. Paste collage-style inside the letters. When complete, outline with thick red or black texta and cut out. Attach to any suitable classroom wall—above the chalk board, for instance.
- Have a special picnic lunch. Everyone brings only fruit (dried as well as fresh), nuts and slices of wholemeal bread. Why not make your contribution a large blackberry and apple pie?

MOTHER'S DAY



Special Project: Craft and Writing

First step: Show pupils how to write a simple acrostic 'poem' using the word MUM, e.g.

M ends bruises and broken hearts
U nderstands all
M y many moods

Second step: Design and cut out large cardboard daisies. Write the poem in the centre, after painting.

Suggested colour schemes:
Red lettering on white centre, red petals.
Black lettering on yellow centre, white petals.
Dark blue lettering on white centre, sky-blue petals.
Send home at end of term ready to be hidden until Mother's Day.

'Best Mum in Australia' . . . Writing/Art Project

Prepare for Mother's Day by getting your pupils to produce certificates which say:

This is to certify that .....
mother of ..... has been awarded the title of Best Mum in Australia for these reasons . . .

Pupils can invent as many reasons as they like. Then set them to work decorating with beautiful lettering (wonderful way to encourage perfect writing and/or printing) and appropriate designs. Suggest they hide these until Mother's Day and present along with one perfect apple or white flower.

ANZAC DAY

Help the children to plan and write a short service for class or school assembly. With younger pupils, make use of a story (such as that of *Simpson and his Donkey*). Older pupils could use the theme of personal sacrifice and explore the meaning of patriotism. Sprigs of rosemary or red paper poppies (symbolising those of Flanders fields) worn by the children can help give a feeling of ceremony. An excellent hymn to use is Donald Swan's *Pilgrim's Hymn*.

EDUCATION WEEK

Education Week or Parent Night Ideas

Hand out large cardboard circles (for a speedy pattern, trace round a dinner plate). Have the kids paint their own faces, complete with freckles, missing teeth and ears that do or don't stick out (provide extra cardboard and cellotape for these). Crepe paper is good for hair. Then set them to work compiling a list of school strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes. This can be very brief or as long as age and space dictate. Candid comments can give a sparkle. Example:

Anne's favourite subjects: Maths, PE and project work.
(Love them!)

Anne's worries: Spelling and handwriting.
(Too careless, but I'm trying.)

Anne's likes: Listening to stories, reading and playtime.
(Can't get enough!)

Anne's dislikes: Friends who tell tales, teachers who aren't fair, wet lunch hours.
(Life would be good without them.)

Don't interfere, but make sure they assess themselves positively. *'No one is hopeless.'* Culled and corrected lists can be written neatly on an oblong card. Use double-sided tape to stick these and the faces to individual desks or create a picture gallery along one wall.

Try This in Education Week

Get the children to make life-size copies of themselves. This is easily done by taping butcher's paper to a wall, then getting each pupil to stand against the sheet while a friend traces the outline of his/her body. Littlies might need help with this. When shapes have been cut out, the children draw or paint in their own features and clothes. There are two ways you can use these giant paper dolls:

(1) Tape to the seats behind the children's desks so that parents entering the room are greeted by a 'silent class'. A 'Welcome to Our Classroom' note, written by each child and addressed to Mum, Dad, Gran etc. can be taped also to the top of the desk. (This is a good exercise for teaching pupils how to set out a semi-formal note in an attractive fashion.) Parents enjoy finding their 'child' and discussion of the copy helps to break the ice quickly.

(2) Have each child write a description of him or herself which is then written on the body of the paper copy. Ask them to give as many clues as possible without mentioning their names, e.g. *I have my father's eyes* or *I come third in my family and was named after my grandmother.* (If care is taken during the lesson in which the descriptions are written, these can be of a high standard and will demonstrate your concern with writing skills.) Tape the finished shapes around the classroom to make an enormous frieze. The task of identifying their child amuses and informs parents, while the children thoroughly enjoy making them guess 'who's who'.

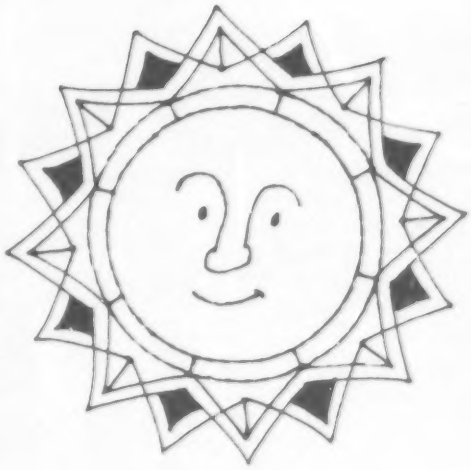
N.B. If you can't do this in Education Week, why not try it on a parent-teacher night?

FATHER'S DAY

Make Dad a Collage Banner

Tell pupils to print the word DAD in large block letters on a long narrow paper banner. Provide a pile of old magazines for them to cull through for any items from advertisements or illustrations that represent something their fathers like, e.g. cars, football matches, pipes, flowers, golf clubs, peanuts, chocolate cake etc. Show the kids how to paste these inside the outlines of the letters, collage-fashion. Paint the background and, when dry, add a slogan such as *My Favourite Hero* or *My Man of the Month* or *My Superman*.

Set aside some class time for children to prepare a 'Father of the Year' scroll to present to their dads. Cut long rectangular sheets from coloured cover paper and suggest they write on them messages such as: *'George Jenks has been selected as Father of the Year by Helen Jenks'*. Encourage decoration, then roll up and tie with ribbon or wool.



CROOKED MICK'S DAY

You won't have heard of this before because I've just invented it! Celebrate Australian Book Week by telling the kids about this marvellous Australian folk hero who ate two sheep at each meal and had feet so large he had to go out of the room every time he wanted to turn round. Check the following books for a description of Crooked Mick:

Crooked Mick of the Speewah and other Tall Tales by Bill Wannan (A. & R.); *Too True* compiled by Anne Bower Ingram (Collins: Lions). Then paint an enormous poster of Mick and sit beneath it while you read about him and swap your own tall tales. For younger children try *Crooked Mick of the Speewah* by Pat Edwards (Reed/Longman).

ANY OLD DAY YOU LIKE TO CHOOSE . . .

18 MARCH

How About a Game of Hopscotch?

A record hopscotch marathon took place on 18-19 March 1977 at Tokaroa High School, Tokaroa, New Zealand. It lasted 39 hours! Why not add some fun to P.E. lessons by organising not a marathon but a competition? Set up a draw and heats and make a big feature of the championship match. For a prize, what about *The Puffin Book of Improbable Records*?

20 JULY

Moon Day

Look first at what really happened on this historic day, then have some fun writing reports and letters to friends from the original astronaut—the cow that jumped over the moon. Discuss her possible character. Was she boastful? Adventurous? Nervous? Why did she do it? Showing off? Or scared by something? A radio or TV interview would be good to do and what about a poster of the heroine, complete with space helmet?

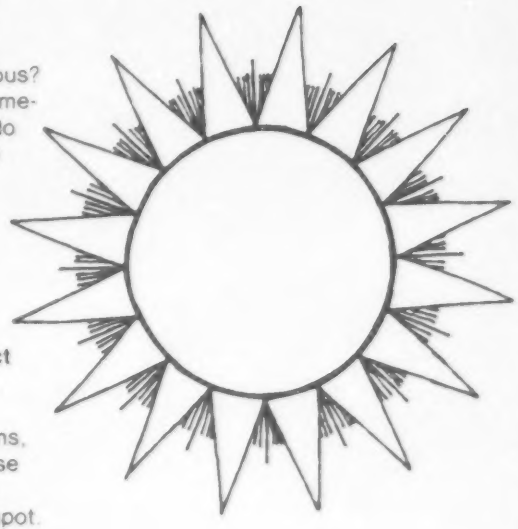
SPRING DAYS

What Time's Spring-time? . . . Maths/Art Project

Take a large cardboard circle for a clockface. Sit pupils down with a pile of old magazines to find Spring-like pictures, e.g. budding flowers, chickens, lambs etc. Then get them to trace and cut out (use stencils) the numerals 1 to 12. Attach cardboard hands to the centre and set up in an accessible spot. Use for 'time-telling' exercises or for reminding about special happenings, etc.

Poems to Spring

Is the sun shining? Then move outside with pads and pens and write individual or group poems while sitting on the grass or in the playground area. Back inside read them Eve Merriam's poem, *A Commercial for Spring*.



NATIONAL GIANT DAY

Declare a National Giant Day—in your classroom anyway! How to celebrate? Start by refreshing the children's memories on giants: the beanstalk giant, the ones Jack the giantkiller polished off, Giant Despair in *Pilgrim's Progress*. Check *Guinness Book of Records* for more factual information and discuss problems extra tall people would face in daily living. Spend the maths period working out what clothing and furniture you'd need if you were five times your height and weight. Make a mural of a giant lying down (so you can run your roll of paper sideways along the wall!) and fill him in with poems and stories. Cut two enormous footprints from cardboard and fix to the floor outside the classroom door. They can carry the invitation, *Step inside for a giant experience*, then ask the next-door classes to pop in for a visit.

P.S. Don't overlook *Zeralda's Ogre* by Tomi Ungerer (Bodley Head) will you?

DANDELION DAY

What's a Dandelion Day?

It's a day when you feel just dandy—on top of the world, in fact! Explain the name to your pupils, then put these questions to them: *Which are the best days of the year? What makes them so? Can we make any day into a Dandelion Day? How could we do this?* Next step is to set up small group discussion so the kids can talk about the experiences they enjoy most and identify the ones that make them feel confident and happy. Then set them to work writing these down. Outcome? A large wall poster to remind you all of what you can do to make each school day into something special. Decorate with golden dandelions, of course.

AUTHOR OF THE MONTH

Spotlight reading throughout the year

***Date to mark:* 21 February**

Author of the month: Norman Lindsay, 1879-1969

Make sure no child misses out on the chance to meet *The Magic Pudding*. Older pupils would enjoy extracts from some of Lindsay's novels—his vivid descriptions of people offer marvellous models for pen-portraits. Good reading for teachers. *Portrait of Pa* by Jane Lindsay (A. & R.). Why not design a giant birthday card in his honour (in the shape of a pudding, of course!) and pin up on the school notice board on 21 February?

***Date to mark:* 15 March**

Author of the month: H. F. Brinsmead, 1922-

This month salute Australian writer H. F. (Hesba) Brinsmead. (Blue Mountain schools take special note. She was a 'local' girl!)

Best known of Brinsmead's books is *Pastures of the Blue Crane* (O.U.P.) in which she explores the relationship between youth and age, while also touching on the problem of racial prejudice. It's always a rewarding story to share with older pupils. *Once There Was a Swagman* (O.U.P.) and *Longtime Passing* (A. & R.), set in the Blue Mountains, are strongly autobiographical. They recreate vividly the background of rainforest and bushland. They are worth exploring for nostalgic descriptions of a life style now lost forever. Of her later books, older readers would enjoy *The Ballad of Benny Perhaps* (Cassell), while *The Honey Forest* (A. & R.) is good for 7-11-year-olds.

Spend an afternoon dipping into her books, then finish up by writing a class letter to thank the author for being the invisible V.I.P. at the celebration.

***Date to mark:* 25 April**

Author of the month: Walter de la Mare, 1873-1956

This month concentrate on that master of the English language, de la Mare. Never sentimental, he handles fantasy without ever degenerating into absurdity. Look for his stories and anthologies, treating yourself to a copy *Peacock Pie*, so you can enjoy the unusual vowel melody and clever rhyming in his poems. A long-time favourite with children is his *The Three Mulla Mulgars* (Faber). It's a story about Thumb, Thimble and Nod, three monkeys who live on the borders of the Forest of Munzar Mulgar. Keep the following de la Mare paperbacks on your desk during the next four weeks and share the contents liberally:
Collected Stories for Children (Puffin—ages 9+)
Come Hither and *Secret Laughter* (Puffin—Ages 7-14)

***Date to mark:* 23 May**

Author of the month: Susan Cooper, 1935-

An Englishwoman, Cooper lives in Boston, U.S.A. Older pupils (10-13) enjoy her *The Dark is Rising* series. This consists of five stories about the age-old conflict between the dark and the light. Her writing is gripping but complex. Perceptive teachers will read *The Dark is Rising* (which is book 2) to the class, then turn the kids loose to read the others for themselves.

Younger pupils would enjoy *Dawn of Fear*—a World War 2 story which tells of a group of boys hardly touched by the war until one day one of them is killed in an air raid. It's a very real story of children's attitudes towards danger. (All published by Puffin.)

Why not celebrate her birthday with a whole afternoon of reading?

Date to mark: 8 June

Author of the month: Ivan Southall, 1923-

After leaving school at the age of 14 when his father died, Ivan Southall worked for some time on the Melbourne *Herald*. Read for yourself his *A Journey of Discovery* (Kestrel) and share a little with the children. You could celebrate his birthday by getting the class to put together a birthday letter or card with candid comment about the children's favourite characters in *Hills End, Ash Road, To the Wild Sky* etc. Post c/- of the publisher.

Date to mark: 2 July

Author of the month: Mary Grant Bruce, 1878-1958

Daughter of an Irish surveyor and pioneer of the Gippsland district, Bruce became a journalist in 1898. She became editor of the children's page in *The Leader* (a weekly published by the *Age*) and it was this that took her into writing for children. The Billabong series soon became a part of Australian childhood. Her plots are predictable and she does idealise the outback style of warm-hearted characters committed to the ideal of mateship, but this can be rather refreshing in a cynical age. Keep her memory fresh by reminding your pupils that the Lintons of Billabong are still proving they are 'made of stern stuff'. Her books are still readily available—and popular.

Date to mark: 3 August

Author of the month: Max Fatchen, 1920-

Fatchen's *The Spirit Wind* (Methuen) is an excellent adventure story with a touch of the supernatural. Its link with Aboriginal lore makes it a good choice for classroom reading. Speaking of children and reading Fatchen says, *'A book is a voyage and I don't want them to be just passengers, but members of the crew'*. Ask pupils what they think he means. Apparently his books about the River Murray, *The River Kings* (Hicks Smith) and *Conquest of the River* (Methuen) were inspired by a visit to the Mississippi. A good chance here to contrast the Murray River characters in these books with Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn.

Date to mark: 4 September

Author of the month: Joan Aiken

Few writers can better Joan Aiken's suspenseful melodrama. Her books are a marvellous blend of parody, satire and nonsense and provide exciting, lively entertainment at all levels. They fall into three categories:

Collections of short stories—fairytales set mainly in the present (e.g. *A Necklace of Raindrops* and *The Kingdom Under the Sea*: both Puffin).

Short novels for young readers—ones about talking or at least extra intelligent animals (such as Mortimer, the talking raven in *Arabel and Mortimer*, B.B.C./ Cape).

Longer novels for 11-14-year-olds. In this category fall her Hanoverian stories which are set in an imaginary period when King James III was on the throne of England. No child should miss meeting Dido Twite, the London brat with dirty, straw-coloured hair and sharp eyes who is heroine of *Black Hearts in Battersea* and *Nightbirds on Nantucket* (Puffin). Why not make 4 September Dido Twite's Day and spend part of the day reading about her adventures?

Date to mark: 21 October

Author of the month: Eleanor Spence, 1928-

Described at times as painstakingly honest portrayals of Australian life, Spence's books reflect two themes. One is the universal theme of self-examination during early adolescence, the other is her particular interest in the Australian heritage, from colonial settlement to post-war immigration. From *Lilypilly Hill* to *A Candle for St Antony*, there's something for everyone. *The Switherby Pilgrims* and *Jamberoo Road* would both provide good background for research into early exploration in N.S.W. *The Nothing Place* and *The October Child* which deal with handicapped children are particularly useful for the teacher. The subjects are treated frankly and sensitively and would lead into useful and constructive discussion. (All books mentioned published by O.U.P.) For younger readers try *The Travels of Hermann* (Collins).

Dates to mark: 16 November for Thiele
27 November for Norman

Authors of the month: a double feature!

Lilith Norman: An author who likes to write about ordinary children trying to cope with extraordinary problems. Norman is always uncompromisingly honest and it's this that gives her books their lively appeal. From *Climb a Lonely Hill*, through to *A Dream of Seas*, there are real characters for children to identify with. (All by Collins.) *My Simple Little brother* (Collins Lions) provides a good selection for short read-aloud sessions.

Colin Thiele: The success of the films *Storm Boy*, *Blue Fin* and *Fire in the Stone* has made sure that Thiele's name is well known to most children. But they need to read his books to savour his masterful story-telling. Although committed to a better understanding of the need to conserve nature's balance, Thiele also stresses tenacity and courage. It's the kind of message today's kids need.

Large papier-mache models of a seal and a pelican would provide an eye-catching background to a display of both author's books. Share with other classes.

Date to mark: 4 December

Author of the month: Ted Greenwood, 1930-

A Melbourne illustrator and writer, Greenwood's unconventional approach makes him marvellous to use at any level. For instance, in *V.I.P. Very Important Plant* (Puffin), he deliberately avoids starting with capital letters so as to suggest that nothing really just *begins*. (An excellent discussion point to take up with older children.) In *Terry's Brrrmmm G.T.* the text is physically fragmented or exaggerated—sometimes being left incomplete so as to make the reader anticipate what might be on the next page. Greenwood believes that picture books should act as a catalyst for the child's own imagination. They also make superb teaching tools.

Any month at all!

Lucky Dip! . . . How to Stimulate Reading

Make up a list of books you know are top favourites with children, being sure to include titles that cover the range of reading levels in your class. Include a few classics as well as collections of folklore and mythology. Check with the school librarian (if you have one) and arrange to have the 30 or so books available for borrowing. Write each book's title and author on a card and put all of these into a large bag or pillowcase. Let each pupil 'dip' for a card. When all have had a turn, visit the library so the children can use the card catalogue to find their particular books. (If there's no school library, borrow from colleagues' classroom libraries and pile up on a table or desk.) After reading their selections pupils report back, rating the books excellent, good, fair or dull. Allow swapping of cards only when pupils have already read the particular book.

SPECIAL PROJECT No. 1

A Timeline of Australian Sea Exploration

Make a Timeline showing the main events in the exploration of Australia by sea. Many children have a very poor concept of time. They need help in forming an understanding of the duration of various historical periods. Timelines are a marvellous way of showing them that history is a continuum from ancient times to the present. Never made one? It's quite simple. A classroom Timeline is a line drawn on a long strip of paper. It's divided into time units as required (months, years or centuries) and pictures are added just above the appropriate dates to represent particular events.

Make up your own chronological list and start your Timeline 'rolling' at the beginning of the year; then as a relevant date comes round you can make its addition a big event of the day.

Follow These Rules for Instant Success

☐ Stick to the theme. The purpose is to clarify chronological relationships. Too much detail only confuses.

☐ Adopt an appropriate scale. If the line is to be read from any point in the classroom, it should be at least 14 to 13 m long. To cover large periods of time, there's no reason why it shouldn't extend right round the classroom, simply turning corners where necessary. If this isn't practical, look for an unbroken corridor wall. Don't worry if your scale means there are large blank spaces—they help to build up a concept of the magnitude of time, so resist any temptation to cut them by telescoping.

☐ Scale accurately. If 2 cm is to represent one week or month, it should represent that unit of time exactly at all points.

☐ Use strong material. A good Timeline means a lot of work, so make it to last. (One idea: paste muslin on the back of the paper; when stored it can then be rolled in a cylinder.)

☐ Make sure the strip is continuous so there's an unbroken sweep from left to right (or top to bottom).

☐ Keep written information to a minimum. Make the illustrations clear and obvious. A good Timeline doesn't offer a lot of facts and should never require figuring out.

☐ Make it attractive. Use colours and imaginative designs.

☐ Bring the Timeline up to date so the children can see the whole period as it relates to the present. And to make it really relevant add your pupils' birth dates so as to tie the past to the present in a personal way. (Note: This part can be disposable so you can update it with future classes if you wish.)

For Infants and Years 2 and 3

Here's a simple adaptation to use with younger children: Run a fishing line or plastic clothesline across the room. As each date occurs, write it on a piece of coloured paper and clip to the line in chronological order. Clothes pegs are ideal for this. Remember—pictures and brief facts only.

Further Reading: *Teaching Social Studies in the Elementary School* by Ralph C. Preston (Holt, Rinehart)

SPECIAL PROJECT No. 2

Walk in Their Shoes

So many exciting stories of incredible courage and stamina get buried beneath the usual dry dates and uninteresting maps. This year make Australian exploration come alive by taking a different approach.

First choose a particular expedition--either for its importance in the development of Australia or because it is part of your state's history. Build up a dossier of information by consulting reference books and collecting dates from *The Australian Encyclopedia.* If you have a school librarian ask his or her help in setting up a good classroom reference table, complete with maps, information books and fiction relevant to the period. Don't overlook picture books which often provide lively, colourful illustrations of clothing, shops, houses etc. Paintings by early artists are also excellent. If school resources are limited, rush to the nearest municipal library.

Next, draw a large map of Australia on heavy cardboard. Cut out and mount in a prominent place in the classroom. Highlight the area of your expedition by painting it a different colour from the rest of the continent. Lightly pencil in the route followed by your explorer and pinpoint important towns and cities.

What Will We Take?

Next step is to involve the children by getting them to make lists of all the equipment the expedition would have had to carry. Keep asking questions:

What clothes would they have taken? What food supplies? How did they carry their water? Did they use horses only? Why did Sturt (for instance) take a boat into the desert? Did they use tents? How did they cook? Who was paying for it all? Why were they going? Any of these would lead into lively and interesting research.

Day by Day

Key into the expedition's actual starting date and follow its footsteps. Set pupils to work on individual journals in which they make daily entries just as if they were part in the expedition. Urge brevity, but help make their observations thoughtful by talking about the type of country the explorers were travelling through. Encourage the children to think about the kinds of wildlife that would be seen.

Each day mark in the expedition's progress on the map. Where specific dates and descriptions of episodes are available, feature these both on the map and in the journals. Lead into an appreciation of the duration of the trip and the physical difficulties that had to be overcome.

It's important to point out that the efficient explorer was not just a man of action. He was also a writer and observer who kept meticulous notes of everything he saw as well as a record of the expedition. Most published these notes in later life.

End the project with a flourish—a stop press item rushed round the school if you made it back or a solemn announcement in assembly if you didn't. And don't forget to share those journals around after you've given them eye-catching covers and titles!

Aborigines in the Community

Look around the community. Are there Aboriginal people living nearby who would help in story-telling or musical activities planned for the week? Are there any Aboriginal children in the school?

Some Famous Aborigines to Talk About

Mention Bennelong, Colebee and Jacky Jacky, but concentrate on more recent men and women, such as:

Neighbour, who was awarded the Albert Medal in 1912 for saving the life of the commissioner who was taking him off to prison; Albert Namatjira, the artist; Charles Perkins and Margaret Valadion, first Aboriginal university graduates; Sir Douglas Nicholls, ex-Governor of South Australia; James Noble, pioneer missionary; Kath Walker, poet; Dick Roughsey, artist, author and illustrator of children's books.

IDEAS FOR NATIONAL ABORIGINAL WEEK

Interesting Facts

☐ In pre-European times, there were approx. 200 distinct Aboriginal languages, many with numerous dialects.

☐ Aborigines used at least 19 different sound instruments in making music. Three of the less well known ones are seed or shell rattles, bones or reeds blown like pan-pipes, and folded leaf whistles.

☐ Boomerangs were not exclusive to the Aborigines. They were used for killing birds in ancient Egypt, southern India, California and elsewhere. However, it is believed that the returning boomerang was known only to some Aboriginal tribes—making it thus an Australian 'first'. It was used for sport, as when they held competitions to see who could make it achieve the greatest number of circles in flight, or who could bring it back nearest the thrower. The Aborigines also threw this boomerang into the air to imitate a hawk flying over a flock of ducks, pigeons or parrots. This would make the flock dip downwards into a net spread across a creek or break in the trees.

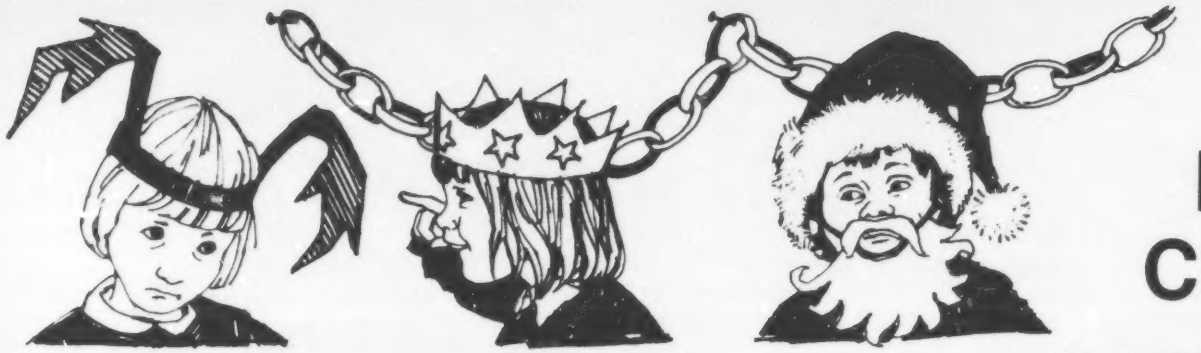
Books Worth Reading

Picture Books, for stories and art projects: *The Quinkins* by Trezise and Roughsey (Collins), winner of the Picture Book of the Year Award, 1979; *The Giant Devil-Dingo* and *The Rainbow Serpent*, both also by Dick Roughsey (Collins); *Djugurba: Tales from the Spirit Time* and *Kwork Kwork, the Green Frog* (both Aust. Nat. Uni. Press).

Good References: *Totem and Taboo* and *Worley and Wommera*, both by Janet Matthews (Collins); *Aboriginal Art of Australia* by Baglin & Mullins (Reed); *Children of the Desert* by Wallace (Nelson); *The Aboriginal Children's History of Australia* (Rigby).

Bright Reading: *Hughie* by David Martin (Nelson); *Stradbroke Dreamtime* by Kath Walker (A.&R.); *Boori* by Bill Scott (O.U.P.); *The Nargun and the Stars* (and others) by Patricia Wrightson (Hutchinson); *Land of the Rainbow Snake* by C. Berndt (Collins).

And for yourself: *The Fringe Dwellers* by Nene Gare (Sun Books).



CHRISTMAS IN THE CLASSROOM

Ideas for Christmas Giving

Fight against the commercialisation of Christmas by helping the children with ideas for simple hand-made gifts. All the following suggestions fit into language and art and craft programs.

Hand-made books. From butcher, litho or cover paper. Riddle books, scrap books, joke books for younger brothers and sisters. Story books, autobiographies, poetry collections ('Poems I like and ones I've written myself') for parents, grandparents and family friends.

Bookmarks. Especially good made from cardboard with original poems written on them.

Decorated notepaper. Trim up scraps of art paper to notepaper size. Pupils then add small motifs, a proverb or the special person's name in the top right-hand corner. Tie five or six sheets together with scraps of coloured wool or ribbon.

Canisters. Use old food cans. Paint in bright colours and personalise by adding the recipient's name.

Rock animals or people as paper-weights. Find smooth stones or rocks and give them painted faces, bodies, clothes etc. Spray or paint with clear vanish.

'Home Sweet Home' banners on paper or fabric. Specially for Mum or Dad.

Classroom Organisation

Spend an evening writing a note to each pupil. Something like this: *Dear Mary (or Phillip), I've enjoyed teaching you and will always remember this year. Happy Christmas and good luck for next year.* Hand out on the last day, or (better still) post so they'll arrive in the first week of the holidays.

Prepare Ahead for Christmas Atmosphere . . . Art

How about window decorations? Decide on a theme—stars, Christmas trees or stockings, Father Christmas faces etc.—and get each child to draw his/her version on newsprint. Use wax crayons to colour each side. Then place between sheets of waxed paper and press with a warm iron. Tape finished designs to the window.

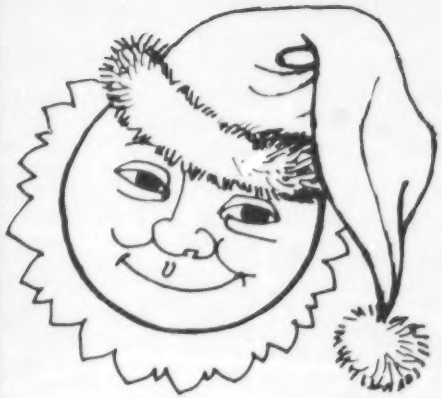
Write a Card . . . Language Work

☐ Collect examples of the phrase *Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year* in different languages, tuning into the ethnic backgrounds of school families.

☐ Have several free writing sessions and pool ideas about appropriate messages to go in Christmas cards or on tags for presents. Make these the basis for handwriting and printing exercises.

Your Christmas Present?

Cut out competition and comparisons by telling the class that this year you'd like one poem or short, short story written inside a card. Just that—nothing more!



Wrap it up in style: Christmas Writing/Craft

Take sheets of coloured paper, or paint white ones in bright colours. Help pupils to turn these into personalised wrapping paper by getting them to write messages about the recipient on them. Example: Paper designed for Mum's present could have printed on it—

☐ List of thank-yous (*Thank you for giving me nice lunches all year, thank you for all our good dinners, thank you for not getting mad when I . . .*)

☐ More acrostic poems similar to the ones done for Mother's Day.

☐ 'I remember' notes (*I remember when you took me to the park, I remember when we had a picnic at the beach, I remember when you hugged me when I was frightened*).

'M'm, That Smells Nice!' . . . Practical Science

Set up a Spice and Herb Corner. Collect samples of cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, ginger, cloves, oregano, thyme, paprika, curry powder etc. After a 'sniffing' session and a full discussion about likes and dislikes, give each group two or three spices and herbs to research. Ask that the reports include the history of each, plus information about where it is found and any other interesting facts. Ask also for a recipe in which it is used. Presented in the form of charts or posters, the reports could provide excellent resource material for other classes. If at all possible, finish the project by making one of the recipes in the classroom. Remember, cakes can be baked in electric frypans!

Present to Smell

Lead on from spice and herb research by making Christmas sachets for presents. Unless keen to tackle sewing problems make them from small envelopes (bought or self-made) and decorate these with appropriate designs. What to put in them? Start with the following recipe, then try some improvisations of your own: Mix well 1 teaspoon of talcum powder or cornflour and 1 teaspoon of salt. Add 1 teaspoon of any spice or herb that has an appealing smell. Suggestions: cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, rosemary, camomile, lemon thyme. Dried flower petals can be added, but remember to allow 3-4 days drying time so that they crumble when touched.

Christmas Vocabulary

Teach the following ways of writing *Merry Christmas* to your pupils, then suggest they use the phrases in cards and on gift tags. *He Mere Kirihimete Me Nga Mihi O Te Tau Hou* (Maori); *Kala Christougenna* (Greek); *Buon Natale* (Italian); *Joyeux Noel* (French); *Froliche Weinachten* (German); *Selamat Hari Raya Puasa* (Malay); *Feliz Navidad* (Spanish); Shinnen Omedetoo (Japanese); *Shin Tan Hwa Lor Shin Nien Chin Pu* (Chinese). Collect more examples from pupils with different cultural backgrounds.

More Ideas for Christmas Giving

Spread the idea of 'giving yourself'. How do the children do this? By sharing a talent (music, story-telling, cooking) or just simply time (offering to run an errand, wash the dishes etc.). The giver makes up a book of coupons, each one of which makes a promise, e.g. to clean shoes or the bird's cage; to make beds or a cup of tea; to set the table; write a letter *for* another; amuse a younger sibling with story-telling or a game—almost endless possibilities. Making up the books, printing and decorating the coupons and choosing the promises are all good language skill developers.

What to buy with *very limited* finance:

☐ One perfect orange or apple.

☐ One flower—or better still, a packet of flower seeds.

☐ A packet of herbs or beans for sprouting.

☐ A cake mix packet, complete with promise to make the cake at a time that suits.

A COLLECTION OF FASCINATING SNIPPETS TO SHARE WITH THE CLASS

POT POURRI

Who's Prickly Moses?

No, the name doesn't belong to a bad-tempered Biblical character. It's applied to several species of wattle, all of which have prickly, spiny leaves. Actually the term is a corruption of 'prickly mimosa'.

Would You Eat Mollymawk or Invite Her Home?

Neither, as it happens. Mollymawk is a name given by sailors to the small species of albatross and sometimes to the giant petrel. Occasionally the terms mollymawk and mollymoke are used or you'll hear the birds called goony or gony. The name comes from the Dutch word 'mallemuck' ('male'—*foolish*, 'moke'—*gull*), while goony is an English dialect word for booby or simpleton.

One for Women's Lib!

The male Nursery fish uses an extraordinary method of aerating the eggs in muddy water. The male has a hook on the nape to which the eggs are attached until the young hatch. So he literally acts as a nursery for his offspring.

'It is true?'

'Be It Ever So Humble . . .'

How were the first Australian houses built? Apart from the Aborigines' humpies, the first houses in Australia were built of wattle and daub. This was an old English method. After a rough timber frame was built, thin branches called 'wattles' were woven in and out, horizontally and close together. Then mud was pressed into this wattle fabric from both sides; finally more mud was added to give a smooth finish. Usually the roof was thatched. Because acacia trees had slender, straight branches just right for using as wattles, they became known as 'wattle' trees. In Western Australia the early settlers also made sun-dried earth blocks which they called 'mud-bats'.

Around the Bathurst area in N.S.W., where the soil was a black clay, walls were often built using earth sods cut out with a spade in squares and laid upon one another with the grass side downwards. After the walls were smoothed down, they were plastered over with lime.

Pisé or rammed earth walls became popular about the time of the early gold rushes. Pise means pounded (full name: *pise de terre*) and the method was probably introduced by European migrants. It was very useful in hot dry areas which lacked suitable trees for making timber-frame houses. Damp earth was rammed into a frame about 46 cm high and 2½ m long which had several iron bars across it. Then the bars were removed, the frame was lifted higher, and the process repeated. This went on till the walls were complete. (If your school grounds lend themselves to it, construction of a cubby house using one of these old methods would provide a valuable learning experience for any age group.)

International Brick-throwing!

Have you ever heard of the international brick-throwing contest? It's held each year between four centres named Stroud—one of which is in N.S.W. The others are in England, Canada and the United States.

A Hungry Goat Story

Once upon a time (in the year 1908, to be exact) the small town of Thargomindah in south-western Queensland had a Methodist church which had thatched-grass walls. Thargomindah also had many goats and one night some of these ate the church. It's a true story—believe it or not!

Shrove Tuesday

Once a holiday, Shrove Tuesday was celebrated as the last day before the beginning of Lent when there could be feasting or fun. Thrifty housewives used up all the food that was forbidden in the Lent period of fasting on bread and water.

Eggs, fat, flour and milk were all mixed together and cooked in a pan. Thus evolved the pancake—and all the customs that went with pancake-tossing, pancake races etc. Most Christians went to church to confess their sins before Lent began. The priest would then pronounce them absolved or *shriven*. So the day came to be called Shrove Tuesday.

Easter Eggs

People began exchanging eggs long before the birth of Christ. The Persians believed that the earth had hatched from a giant egg. For them, and for the ancient Egyptians, the egg was a symbol of new life. In both countries eggs were dyed in spring colours and given to friends as gifts. Early Christians of Mesopotamia were the first to use coloured eggs for Easter and the custom soon spread. In some European countries eggs were always dyed red to represent the joy of the Resurrection.

How did a rabbit get mixed up with eggs? Well, in ancient Egypt the rabbit symbolised birth and new life. It was also seen as a symbol of the moon. As the moon determines the date of Easter, the two became connnected in peoples' minds.

'One-a-penny'

In the United Kingdom, street criers walked the streets early on Good Friday, carrying freshly baked buns in baskets. Their calls are immortalised in the nursery rhyme, 'Hot Cross Buns'. There's an interesting custom in Canada. In some provinces a special kind of Easter bread is baked. This used to be called the *Holy Loaf* and was often kept for the whole year because it was believed it would cure sickness. Sufferers of any stomach upset would be given the bread to eat, or sometimes pieces would be made into a poultice to put on cuts or wounds that would not heal.

'Gee, listen to this!'

Whitsuntide

Comes from the Anglo-Saxon words for *White Sunday* which derives from the white garments worn by the Apostles at the time of the descent of the Holy Ghost. Falling seven weeks after Easter, the date varies. It is one of the great festivals of the Christian church and in Stuart times, especially, was celebrated with much eating and drinking. Special ale was brewed, and the Church approved so long as people remembered to come to the service. Whitsun plays were performed at country festivals and many strange customs evolved. One old English country tradition said that the first gooseberries should be eaten on Whitsunday. Those who did this were less likely to make fools of themselves in the next twelve months than those who neglected to do so! Cook gave the names *Whitsunday Passage* and *Whitsunday Island* to these Queensland places because this was the day on which he first entered the passage.

Ash Wednesday

Lent (the long fast) first began in memory of the forty days that Christ spent in the wilderness. Once it was observed as a day of mourning. Many people wore black and everyone went to church. Palms that had been blessed on Palm Sunday were burnt and the ashes kept for the service on Ash Wednesday when the priests sprinkled ashes on the heads of the worshippers as a reminder that they must do penance for their sins.

Lent

Explain to the class that the term comes from the Old English word *leneten* which means springtime—the season in which it falls in the northern hemisphere. Originating as a time of spiritual preparation for Easter, its length has varied through the ages. Once a 36-day period of fast, it was changed to 40 days around A.D. 800. It's thought this was done as a reminder of the 40 days Jesus Christ fasted in the wilderness.

'I didn't know that!'

'How strange!'

St Valentine's Day

One tradition says the custom began long ago in the old Roman feast called *Lupercalia*—a festival of 'love feasts and lotteries'. At this time unmarried women and men drew lots from an urn. The name they drew was the name of the person who would be their partner for the feast—or sometimes for everything during the next year.

Who was St Valentine? Several saints were called this, and oddly enough two died on the same day—around 270 A.D. One of them was a Roman priest who was beheaded for sheltering Christians. The custom of sending valentines or love-tokens, usually anonymously, to one's beloved probably had only an accidental connection with St Valentine. In medieval times, in England and France, people were sure that it was on the fourteenth day of the second month that the birds began to choose their mates. It is believed that this became mixed up in people's minds with the death of one of the St Valentines.

May Day

Celebration of May Day goes back to very ancient times, e.g. the Romans were known to have held flower-decked parades at this time. In the northern hemisphere young people would rise early so as to go out to gather the may-tree blossom and greenery. It was considered lucky to be first to bring these into the house. Fairs began on May Day—often continuing for a week or longer. Mayfair, a district of London, has this name because it was once site of the biggest and best-known May fairs. Maypoles were set up on village greens and the May Queen (prettiest girl in the village) decked with garlands was carried through the streets. May 1 is also celebrated in many countries as International Labor Day.

Mother's Day

An American, Julia Ward Howe, is credited with the idea. In 1871 she suggested a mother's day dedicated to peace. It is now celebrated in many countries, although dates vary. A good opportunity to stress the idea of simple, hand-made gifts and cards to offset commercial exploitation!

St Patrick's Day

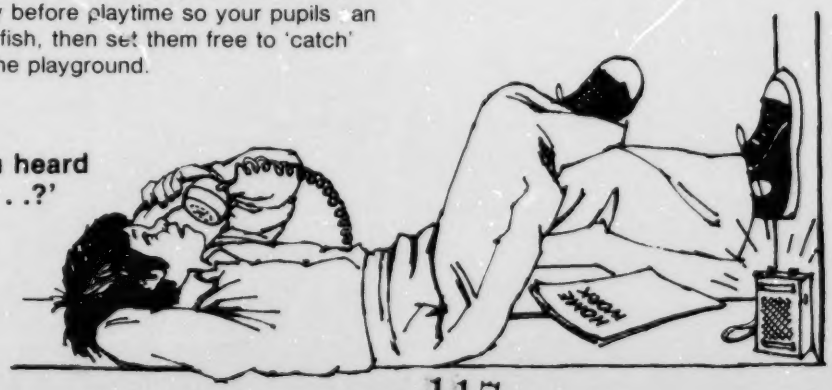
When was this first celebrated in Australia? We know that Governor Macquarie recognised the day in 1810, when he provided entertainment for convicts employed by the government. After this it became the custom to hold parades and special dinners on the day. Contests between Protestant and Catholic Irishmen (the Orange and the Green) were arranged, with return bouts being held on 12 July (the day commemorating Protestant William III's victories over Catholic James II). Troubles often broke out and both dates could be very dangerous days in the major cities. In some years, in some places, St Patrick's Day was a general holiday when the whole community had a day off work. However, the attempted assassination in 1888 of Prince Alfred by Henry O'Farrell (who was suspected of being a Fenian) put an end to this and it was some time before it was safe to celebrate St Patrick's Day again.

April Fools Day

Some history? The day's origin is uncertain. One suggestion is that it used to be the one day on which court jesters were given a holiday. Other people living in the household had to take over for them. In France it is known as *'Poisson d'Avril'*, April Fish Day. Children make paper fish which they try to attach secretly to an adult's back. Then they chant, 'See the April Fish!' Hand out coloured paper, scissors and cellotape shortly before playtime so your pupils can make their own fish, then set them free to 'catch' other pupils in the playground.

'You must be kidding!'

'Have you heard about . . .?'



ANZAC—Some History

The name Anzac was born in January 1915 and arose from the telegraphic code name for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps in France. Anzac Day was first celebrated in 1916 by the troops themselves. The ceremony took place at Serapeum in the Suez Canal Defence Zone where the Gallipoli veterans were stationed. Every man who had served on Gallipoli wore a blue ribbon on his right breast. Those who had also taken part in the historic landing wore a red ribbon also. Not many wore both. After a short service, all work stopped. There was cricket and a swimming carnival (with over 15,000 contestants!) in the Canal and then concerts to end the day. Cables were sent to the Anzacs in France and there was much talk about continuing to enjoy many happy returns of this special day. Anzac Day evolved as a public holiday and day of remembrance in Australia and New Zealand.

First Public Holiday Celebrated in Australia

George III's fiftieth birthday fell on 4 June 1788, so Governor Phillip proclaimed this a public holiday, as was the custom in England. Flags were flown, there were royal salutes at sunrise, 1 pm and sunset, and at noon the marines fired three volleys while the band played *God Save the King*. The Governor and officers had a dinner of mutton, pork, duck, fowl, fish and kangaroo, with wine and porter. Even the convicts had a holiday, and when the soldiers and sailors were given extra porter and rum, the convicts too received a ration. A few lucky convicts were granted their freedom under the custom of royal clemency. The day ended with a bonfire, around which the convicts gathered to sing loyally of the King and to give three cheers for the Governor—or so we are told! Phillip wrote, 'There was not one heavy heart in this part of His Majesty's dominion'. One wonders—especially about the man who was caught burgling an officer's tent during the evening!

Anzac—and the *Dinkum Digger*

Where did the term *digger* come from? Most people believe that it was first used as a name for miners on the Australian gold fields. However, New Zealanders often claim it came from the gum-diggers in their country. In any case by 1917 the word was being used by members of the Australian and New Zealand divisions involved in trench warfare in France—probably because they felt they did more digging of trenches than fighting.

Book Week: Some Facts to Share with the Class

- ☐ Earliest book printed in Australia was *New South Wales Standing Orders* in 1802. Publisher—George Howe.
- ☐ The earliest illustrated book was *Birds of New South Wales* by John William Lewin. It appeared in 1813.
- ☐ Earliest novel was *Quintus Servinton* by Henry Savery, published in Hobart, 1830-1. (He's an interesting fellow. Look him up in *The Australian Encyclopedia*.)

First of August is Wattle Day

(N.B. It may be Sept. 1 in certain areas.)
Wattle is an Australian national emblem. There are at least 700 different kinds of wattle, which is the largest genus in the flora of Australia. The name *wattle* applies to any Australian species of *Acacia*. Wattle Day has become an established anniversary in many centres and there are 'wattle clubs' in several towns.

Share with pupils some of the interesting names given to the species. These range from pleasant Aboriginal ones—*brigalow, eumong, gidgee, mulga* etc.—to the descriptive *blackwood, ironwood, kangaroo-thorn, wait-a-while*, and *raspberry jam* (when cut, the timber smells like raspberry jam). The strange name *dead finish* is applied to two species which are large, spreading, rather spiny bushes. Presumably they bring the traveller to a 'dead finish'.

First Public Coach

On 1 October 1814, William Highland 'acquainted the public' through the *Sydney Gazette* that he had set up a 'Common Stage Cart to go from Sydney every Monday at ten in the forenoon through Parramatta, Baulkham Hills etc. to Windsor and Richmond for passengers and luggage at moderate charges'. This was the beginning of coaching services in Australia. By 1827 coaches were an established part of Sydney life. Early descriptions state that coaches carried six passengers inside and six on the outside—the inside fare being six shillings. Pupils would enjoy hearing about how 'four strong spirited horses carry you merrily along the Sydney streets, the bugle warning, as you proceed, all for "Paramatta! Paramatta!" to hasten to their places . . .' *Two Years in New South Wales* (1827) by Peter Cunningham.

'That's really interesting!'

Labor Day

Why and how did this holiday come about? Its beginning lies in the nineteenth century campaign by the trade union movement for shorter working hours. As people in England moved from rural labour into the factories, they found themselves working to more rigid hours, and radicals began to agitate against the ten-hour working day. Many of the Australian immigrants of the 1850s came out determined that they would not be treated as if they were convicts or paupers. Tradesmen wanted control over their working conditions. In 1855 some Sydney stonemasons struck for an eight-hour day and got it. Then on 21 April 1856 stonemasons in Melbourne decided not to work for more than eight hours a day, six days a week. Within a few weeks nearly all workers in building trades won the eight-hour day without loss of wages and it was extended to several other occupations. On 12 May those who had won this 'boon' marched through the city to band music, proudly carrying a red, white and blue banner. This had been made by the wife of a Scottish stonemason and was inscribed—8 Hours Labour
8 Hours Recreation
8 Hours Rest

The procession ended with dinner and a fete and 'every working man and the public at large were invited'. From then on, similar celebrations were held each year on 21 April in memory of the strike which began it all. By 1862 in Sydney, members of the societies of carpenters and joiners, bricklayers and plasterers had also gained an eight-hour day. The carpenters and joiners held a picnic each year and by 1868 this day had become a general demonstration in favour of an eight-hour day for all workers. (It became a procession similar to the Melbourne one in 1871.) March 1865 saw 500 men of the Brisbane societies of masons and plasterers marching through the streets in the cause of urging others to agitate. Meanwhile, in Adelaide, stonemasons and bricklayers formed a society to fight for the eight-hour day in the same year. And so, around Australia, the Labor Day or Eight Hour Day holiday was born. The dates and names vary from State to State, and the spelling l-a-b-o-r is now the common form. (Reference: *The Australian Colonists*, K. S. Inglis.)

Guy Fawkes (1570-1606)

Who was he? A Yorkshireman, Guy Fawkes enlisted in the Spanish army in Flanders at the age of 23. In 1604, Thomas Winter, one of the originators of the Gunpowder Plot, brought him to England. Fawkes moved into a house next to Parliament and for almost a year he supervised the construction of a gunpowder mine in a cellar beneath the House of Lords. The building was to have been blown up on 5 November, but the plot was discovered the day before. Fawkes was executed on 31 January 1606, along with Winter and the other conspirators.

First Melbourne Cup Day, 1861

The Victoria Racing Club was founded in 1864, but horse-racing had begun much earlier. The first recorded races took place on 6 and 7 March 1838 near Bateman's Hill, Melbourne. The first meeting was held at Flemington in March 1840. English Jockey Club rules were observed and silks were worn by the riders for the first time. Who won the first Melbourne Cup? A N.S.W. horse called *Archer*.

Michaelmas: Feast of St Michael

St Michael, thought of as leader of the armies of heaven, is also regarded as prince of all the angels and guardian of human souls. Some interesting English customs are connected with this day. One saying goes—*Who so eats goose on Michaelmas Day, shall never lack money his debts to pay*. It is said that Elizabeth I was eating goose when she heard the news of the defeat of the Armada on this day (1588). Ever after, it became the custom to serve this dish.

Uluru (Ayers Rock)

Sacred to Aborigines who associate it with legends of the Dreamtime, this huge monadnock is 335 m high. It was recorded in 1872 by Giles who saw it from the northern side of Lake Amadeus. He reached it the following year, just after Gosse had left. It was named in honour of Henry Ayers, South Australian premier. The marathon runner, Ian Hasseli, climbed the rock in 1972 in 14 min. 45 sec. It is now officially known by its Aboriginal name, Uluru.

St Nicholas

The story goes that a rich young man named Nicholas was walking through the streets of his home town one day when he overheard a father and his three daughters lamenting the loss of all their money. One of the girls offered to go out into the streets to beg for food, but the father said, 'No. Let us wait one more night. I will pray once more to God for help.'

Among Nicholas' inherited treasures were three bars of solid gold. That night he took one of these and thrust it through an open window in the family's house, then he tiptoed away. He did this again on a second night and then on a third. However, on the third night he was discovered. The poor man, who had believed the gold sent from heaven, knelt at Nicholas' feet. But Nicholas lifted him up and said, 'Give thanks to God, for it was He who sent me to you'. So began the legend of Saint Nicholas—or Santa Claus. How much truth in the story? No one knows. But there was a Saint Nicholas who was born at a place called Parara in Lycia (Asia Minor) about 400 A.D. He became Bishop of Myra, where he died and was buried, though later his bones were shifted to Italy.

Tasman's Later Years

History books seldom tell how explorers end their lives unless they died dramatically, like Captain Cook! Did you know that Tasman was found guilty of having grossly maltreated his men while drunk during an attempted raid on the Spanish silver fleet? Suspended from his office in 1649 he was reinstated two years later, but retired soon afterwards to engage in private trading. He died a rich man eight years later, having become one of the largest landowners in Batavia.

Who Knows the State Emblems?

All the States have officially adopted floral emblems and most have faunal ones as well.
N.S.W.: Waratah, platypus, kookaburra.
Tasmania: Tasmanian blue gum.
Victoria: Common heath, Leadbetter's possum, helmeted honeyeater.
Queensland: Cooktown orchid, koala.
S. Australia: Sturt's desert pea, hairy-nosed wombat, piping shrike or 'magpie'.
W. Australia: Red-and-green kangaroo paw, numbat or banded anteater and black swan.
N. Territory: Sturt's desert rose.
(Why not make your State's emblems in an art lesson early in the year and feature on the classroom door?)

Famous Aboriginals

Most famous is **Jacky Jacky** who carried E. B. Kennedy to safety after he was wounded, then cared for him till he died. The story of how Jacky Jacky concealed the expedition papers in a tree, then met the ship sent to meet the expedition and led a party back to Kennedy's grave is one of bravery and loyalty. A creek and a World War II airstrip in Cape York were named after him.

Yuranigh took part in Mitchell's 1845-46 expedition into western New South Wales. A creek and a lagoon in Queensland bear his name.

Wylie accompanied E. J. Eyre on the perilous trip on which John Baxter was killed. Wylie stayed with Eyre until they reached Esperance Bay where they were helped by the crew of the whaler *Mississippi* and then went on with him to complete the journey.

Tommy Windich and **Bill Noongale** were part of Sir John Forrest's expeditions into the interior of Western Australia in 1870 and 1874.

Early Australian Inns—What's in a Name?

There were some interesting names chosen for the first inns and public houses. Here's a selection:
Sydney: The Hero of Waterloo; Barley Mow.
Parramatta: The Freemason's Arms; Ship; Crown; Yorkshire Grey; Salutation (all open by 1798).
Hobart: The Whale Fishery (opened 25 July 1807).
Melbourne: Lamb Inn; Frenchman's inn; The Grape Vine (actually built around a grape vine).
Adelaide: Royal Admiral; Black Bull.
Brisbane: Golden Fleece; The Home.
Perth: Happy Emigrant Public House.
Fremantle: South Sea Hall Public House.
Talk about these with the class and then hold a writing competition to see if the children can come up with interesting and inventive names for imaginary 'public houses' which would serve soft drinks and milk shakes.

'Who'd have thought it!'

THE HUMAN SIDE

—Some Fascinating Sidelights About Australian Explorers

'She loves me, she loves me not . . .'

A hot-tempered, anxious lover who doesn't quite know where he stands with his lady does not seem ideal explorer material. Apparently Burke was madly in love with actress Julia Matthews. He'd proposed the week before the expedition set out, but she had coolly replied that she would make up her mind when he got back. One wonders how much of his impatience and rashness stemmed from his desire to impress the fair Julia. When it became obvious that something had gone wrong, however, she persuaded the editor of the *Argus* to whip up public interest in the idea of forming a search party so perhaps she had decided to accept him. We'll never know. Julia returned to England where she became a great favourite and later toured Europe and America with considerable success.

Does rum prevent scurvy? An interesting snippet of information is that Wills was appointed second-in-command after Burke quarrelled with Landell over the rum which was being carried to prevent the specially imported camels from getting scurvy.

Lost . . . 'by the arts of a woman'

Why did Henry Hacking put his job as first pilot at Port Jackson in jeopardy by stealing? The clue lies in a letter written by Governor King to Lieut-Governor Collins of Tasmania: 'I am glad you have kept Hacking,' he said, 'he is a good man but was lost here by the arts of a woman.'

'If I can't have it, you're not going to!'

A quarrelsome pair this! It has been recorded that once when Hovell and Hume were threatening to split up they fought so bitterly over who was to have the frying pan they actually broke it! And it seems they even seriously considered cutting the tent in two so neither would get it. Yet they showed imagination in their planning in that they took along clover seed and peach stones to plant at all main stopping places.

'Drinking rum and . . .'

The apparently irrepressible Jorgensen met his true love in Tasmania soon after being granted his ticket-of-leave. She was a large, dark-eyed, laughing girl from County Cork who'd been transported for theft. Her name was Norah Corbett and she was working as a laundress. Within a year of Jorgensen receiving his pardon, they were married. But Norah, who loved to sing and talk, also loved to drink. In fact they both liked rum far too much. Within ten years Norah was dead of alcoholism. Jorgensen lasted barely a year longer.

'Bail up,' he said . . .

Even Sturt exaggerated at times! He claimed that he was bailed up by 'bushranger O'Donohoe' [*sic*] who let him pass once he recognised him. But the bushranger Jack Donahoe had died five years before Sturt said this happened.

'Con man' or 'charmer'?

From all accounts a charming 'sponger'. While at the University of Berlin, Leichhardt became friendly with a young Englisnman, William Nicholson. From then on Nicholson, who had only a modest income, supported Leichhardt both in England and while they travelled round in Europe. Soon after Leichhardt became a deserter by not reporting for military service in Germany, both men decided to emigrate to Australia. William pulled out at the last moment, but paid Leichhardt's passage and gave him 200 pounds as well! By now Leichhardt was calling himself 'doctor' despite the fact that he'd never gained any kind of degree.

The charm evidently continued to work in Australia, for a number of pastoralists and businessmen contributed to the cost of his expeditions even though Leichhardt was no bushman. (John Mann, T. L. Michell's son-in-law, who accompanied Leichhardt on one of his trips, is reported as saying that Leichhardt couldn't find his way down Sydney's George Street!)

We are told that the explorer often stole sugar, tapioca and mustard and cress from the stores and was so greedy that once, when they had a duck for dinner, he took half for himself, leaving the rest for the other eight men. Yet Leichhardt was one of the few explorers who keenly observed the Aboriginal food-gathering methods and who was prepared to experiment by trying whatever he saw them eating.

'Just call me Count'

Strzelecki went one better than Leichhardt. He gave himself the title 'Count', although he had no right to it. After Strzelecki had failed in an attempted elopement with a girl of 15 he took on the job of running an estate in Russian-annexed Poland, but was charged with misappropriation of funds. Nice that he made it through to respectability and fame in the end!

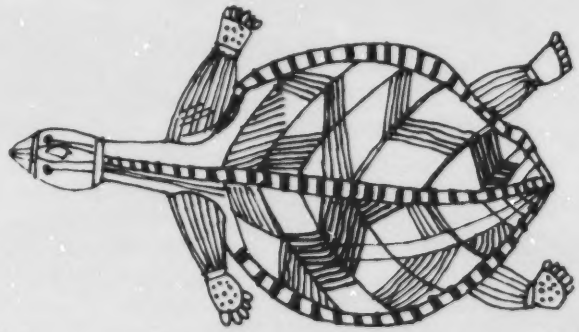
A maiden betrayed!

While working at Port Phillip in the early 1840s, the 25-year-old Edward Kennedy had an affair with an Irish immigrant girl, Margaret Murphy. Already under a cloud for having criticised a local magistrate, Kennedy was recalled to Sydney.

Margaret Murphy went to Tasmania where she gave birth to Kennedy's daughter, whom she called Eliza. Apparently Kennedy had the baby baptised in his name and provided for them both until his death. He willed the bulk of his estate to Eliza. Strange that a man who is described as 'deeply religious' and 'a fine noble fellow' still couldn't fly against convention enough to marry the unhappy Margaret and be a father to his own child.

Pistols at dawn?

Thomas Mitchell actually fought a duel with Stuart Donaldson, first Premier of N.S.W. He also quarrelled so furiously with his eldest son, Livingstone, that he disinherited him. On the positive side, he was extremely imaginative. One of his inventions was a steamship propeller based on the design of a boomerang.



THE HISTORY OF THE MONTHS

JANUARY

January takes its name from the old Roman god, Janus, who had two faces. He was called the keeper of the door and is often found in old sculptures and carvings above doorways—looking both ways at once.

Zodiac sign
Aquarius: the Water Bearer ≈

Eleventh sign of the zodiac which the sun enters on 20 January. This constellation includes M2, the globular cluster of thousands of stars, 45,000 light years from earth. In mythology, Aquarius was pictured as an old man pouring water from his jar into the open mouth of the Southern Fish.

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FEBRUARY

February was once the month of the *Februa* or purification feast in Roman times. Both months were added to the Roman calendar when the Latin year increased from ten months.

February/March in the Greek calendar was 'the time of the killing of the stag' when Artemis the huntress was honoured.

Zodiac sign
Pisces: the Fishes ♓

The twelfth sign of the zodiac which the sun enters about 19 February.

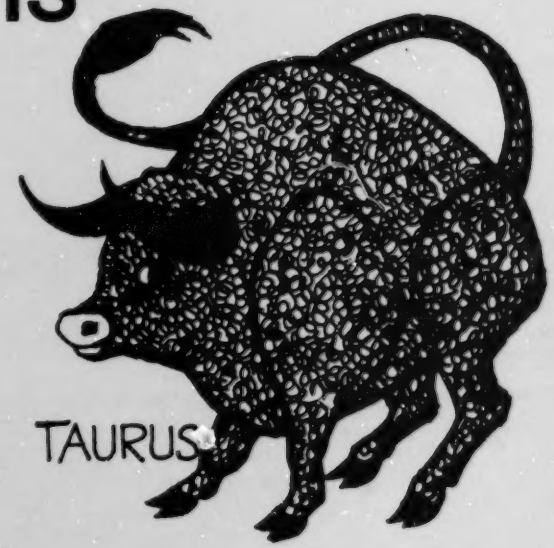
MARCH

March was once the first month in the Roman calendar. It was sacred to the war god, Mars, the protector of Rome. In the Greek calendar March/April was named for Artemis, the huntress, who is 'alone in the night' and there was a feast in her honour on April 16.

Zodiac sign
Aries: the Ram ♈

First sign of the zodiac which the sun enters about 21 March.

In Greek legend, Aries was the ram with the Golden Fleece, which carried the royal children, Phrixus and Helle, away from the fury of their stepmother, Ino. The ram was sacrificed and the Argonaut's expedition organised to recover the Golden Fleece.



APRIL

In the northern hemisphere, April is the month when everything begins to grow again and so its name comes from the Latin word *aperire* which means 'to open'. The Romans saw April as the spring month which opens the year and they dedicated it to Venus, goddess of beauty.

Zodiac sign
Taurus: the Bull ♉

The second sign of the zodiac which the sun enters about 21 April. Within its boundaries are the Pleiades and the Hyades.

In mythology, Taurus was the snow-white bull which carried Europa to Crete. The Pleiades were seven sisters—daughters of Atlas. The Hyades were their half sisters.

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MAY

May was once dedicated to the goddess Maiia, daughter of Atlas. As this is the time when plants and animals begin to grow in the northern hemisphere, the word originally meant *big* or *the big one* and is connected with the earth. Germanic people called it the *month of pasture*. May/June was the last month in the Greek calendar. Its name came from the women's feast—*the carrying of the parasols* in honour of Athena, who is supposed to have invented them.

Zodiac sign
Gemini: the Twins ♊

The third sign of the zodiac which the sun enters about 21 May. The name comes from the two bright stars—white Castor and yellow Pollux—which supposedly represented the twin brothers, the Gemini, sons of Jupiter and Leda.
Castor was famed for his ability to manage horses, Pollux (which is the Roman form of the Greek Polydeuces) for his skill as a boxer. From all accounts they were a mighty pair. They rescued their young sister Helen when she was carried off by Theseus; they took part in the Calydonian hunt and, as members of the Argonauts' expedition, captured Talus, the Cretan man of bronze.
When Castor was killed in a fight, Pollux asked to die also. Zeus allowed them to take turns in Hades or to spend alternate days in Hades and Heaven. They were worshipped as gods by sailors, to whom they appeared as St Elmo's fire.

The slang expression, *by Jimminy*, probably came from the old Roman oath, *by Gemini*.

JUNE

June is named for Juno, Roman goddess of marriage, childbirth and adult life. Wife of Jupiter, she was thought of as the special benefactress of women, so this month was favoured for weddings. Germanic peoples called it the *month when the fields lie fallow*. Ask your class to choose a name which would truly represent the area in which they live.

Zodiac sign
Cancer: the Crab ♋

The fourth sign of the zodiac, which the sun enters about 21 June. It's historically important. Around 125 B.C. the Greek astronomer Hipparchus found that the sun at the summer solstice lay overhead among the stars of Cancer at lat. 23½° N. And so the parallel was named the Tropic of Cancer. The northern summer solstice has since been moved into Gemini, but the old geographical term has been kept. In classical mythology, Cancer pinched Heracles' foot when he was fighting the Hydra. Heracles crushed the crab, but Juno later placed it in the stars.

JULY

July/August was dedicated to Apollo in the Greek calendar and was once called *Quinctilis* by the Romans. However, in 44 B.C., by decree of the Roman Senate, it was dedicated to Gaius Julius Caesar, who was born 12 July, 100 B.C. The Germanic name was *month of hay*.

Zodiac sign
Leo: the Lion ♌

The fifth sign of the zodiac which the sun enters about 21 July. In classical mythology Leo was the fierce beast of the Nemean forest, slain by Hercules as one of his twelve labours.

AUGUST

The Athenian calendar continued to honour Apollo during August/September and a feast was held acclaiming him as *the helper in battles*. Sextilis or sixth month to the Romans, it was dedicated to the Emperor Augustus when he was first nominated Consul in 8 B.C. The name *Augustus*, meaning 'the revered', is a title which was bestowed upon Gaius Octavius, grandnephew and adopted son of Julius Caesar. Among the Germanic peoples this was the *month of the willow*.

Zodiac sign
Virgo: The Virgin ♍

The sixth sign of the zodiac which the sun enters about 21 August. In mythology, Virgo was the winged goddess of the harvest who descended to earth during this season to preside over the work.

SEPTEMBER

Apollo continued to do well in the Greek calendar. During September/October there was a feast for the god during which a dish of beans was cooked and offered to him. September was, of course, the seventh month in the ancient Roman calendar, which explains its name. Among the Germanic peoples it was the *month of the grape-gathering*.

Zodiac sign
Libra: the Balance, or Scales ♎
The seventh sign of the zodiac which the sun enters about 21 September. It is the only zodiacal group not represented by an animate being, though some early people considered its stars formed one claw of Scorpio. The sign was called the Balance because the sun enters it at the time of the equinox when the periods of day and night are the same length.

OCTOBER

The Greeks saw October as the month of storms. They consecrated the period Oct./Nov. to Zeus—'the stormy', 'the boisterous'. More prosaically, the Romans called it the eighth month, fashioning its name from the Latin word for eight. In the Germanic calendar it was known as the *harvest month*. An old English name for October was *full moon of winter*.

Zodiac sign
Scorpio: the Scorpion ♏
The eighth sign of the zodiac which the sun enters about 22 October. Scorpio is a very old constellation, mentioned in many ancient writings. In classical mythology this was the scorpion which, by its sting, caused the death of the mighty hunter, Orion. It also stung the horses of Phaethon on his disastrous ride in the sun chariot.

NOVEMBER

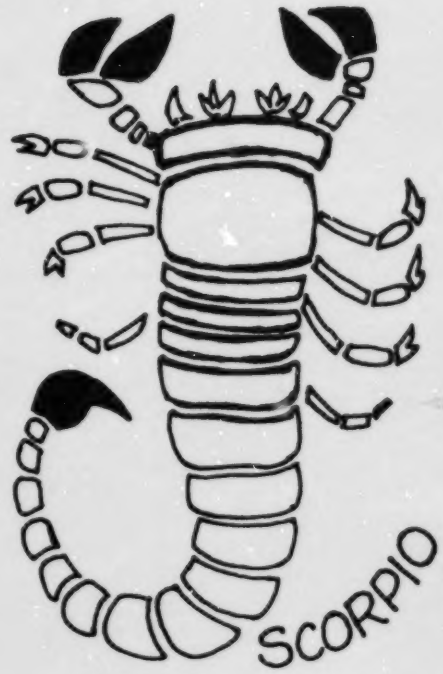
November to the Romans simply meant *ninth month*. In the Athenian calendar the period November/December was dedicated to the god Poseidon.

Zodiac sign
Sagittarius: the Archer ♐
The ninth sign of the zodiac which the sun enters about 22 November. In mythological diagrams, this constellation depicted the centaur Chiron, a skilful archer whom Hercules killed with a poisoned arrow. Jupiter then placed him among the stars, where he constantly aims an arrow at the Scorpion.

DECEMBER

Tenth month in the Roman calendar, December's name is possibly an ancient adjective—a compound of *Decimus* and *membrum*. The period December/January was seen by the Greeks as the month that protects marriage.

Zodiac sign
Capricorn: the Goat ♑
The tenth sign of the zodiac which the sun enters about 22 December. Around 125 B.C. Hipparchus noted that the sun at the time of the (northern) winter solstice lay among the stars of this constellation when it was overhead at lat. 23½° S, so he named that parallel the Tropic of Capricorn. As with the Tropic of Cancer, later calculations moved the solstice westwards into Sagittarius, but the geographical name still stands.
In mythology, Capricornus represented the god Pan. One day, Pan, in fright, jumped into the water and was curiously transformed—the part above the water into a goat, the part beneath into the tail of a fish.



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WHY ARE THEY CALLED THAT?

The Naming of Australian Places

Adelaide, S.A.
Named after Queen Adelaide, wife of King William IV. Apparently Wellington was suggested (after the Duke of Wellington), but the King indicated he would prefer his wife's name to be used.

Alice Springs, N.T.
Named by W. N. Mills, surveyor and officer-in-charge of preliminary work on the Overland Telegraph Line. He wrote, '. . . *with numerous waterholes and springs, the principal of which is the Alice Springs which I had the honour of naming after Mrs Todd'.* Lady Alice Todd was wife of Sir Charles Todd, the man responsible for building the Telegraph Line.

Bendigo, Vic.
Once upon a time in England there were boy triplets called Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego Thompson. Abednego (who was also called William) was a pugilist who had many famous bouts. His supporters couldn't cope with Abednego, so he was nicknamed 'Bendigo'. As a fighter, he was well known in England and Australia.
Bendigo the town is situated on what was once Ravenswood station. It's believed there was an employee on the station who was often compared with 'Bendigo' Thompson and that local people began to talk of him as 'Bendigo' and the place as Bendigo's Creek. The official name was Sandhurst for many years, but this was unpopular and the old name was restored in 1891.
Incidentally, the original Bendigo eventually gave up fighting and became a non-conformist minister.

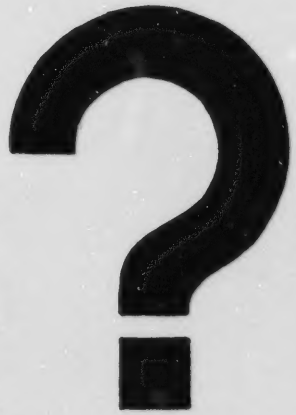
Ballarat, Vic.
In March 1838 William Cross Yuille established Ballaarat station on the banks of what was then known as Black Swamp. Today this sheet of water is called Lake Wendouree. This lake was a favourite camping place of the local tribe of Aborigines and the name Ballaarat is derived from the Aboriginal *balla-arat* meaning 'resting place'. In time the double *aa* and hyphen were dropped, but the spelling Ballaarat is still used in some official circles.

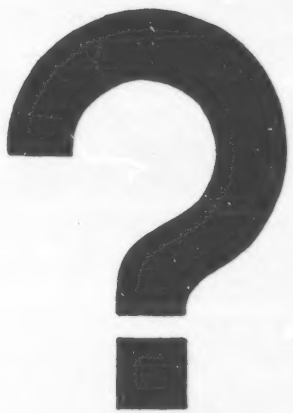
Bega (bee-ga), N.S.W.
First gazetted in 1851, the town derives its name from a station called Biggah, which was thought to be Aboriginal for 'beautiful'.

Brandy Mary Flat, near Tumut, N.S.W.
Once there was a Mrs Spicer who, together with one 'Roaring Mag', opened a grog shop at Kiandra during the goldrush. Mrs Spicer dearly loved her brandy and became known as 'Brandy Mary'. There's a story which says that when her son became a schoolmaster he sent his mother a grand piano. It couldn't possibly fit through the door so a side wall had to be pulled down to get it in the hut. Sad to say, Brandy Mary was never known to play it!

Cooktown, Qld
When Captain James cook beached and careened the *Endeavour* at the mouth of what be called Endeavour River in June 1770, he was probably too concerned with his ship to spare much thought for future development of the site. Obviously, Cooktown was named in his honour.

Coolgardie, W.A.
Everyone knows that gold was discovered in the vicinity of the town in 1892, few that the name derives from the Aboriginal name for the district—'Golgardie'. It was Warden John Michael Finnerty who first recorded the name in its present spelling.





Darwin, N.T.

The town was first called Palmerston after the abandoned Escape Cliffs Settlement, but in 1911 the name Darwin was applied to both the town and the harbour. But where did the name Escape Cliffs come from? It seems that when Lieutenant James Lort Stokes (discoverer of Darwin Harbour) was in this area, in 1839, he sent a party ashore from the *Beagle*. While these men were on the beach, a group of Aborigines appeared on the cliffs high above. They were shouting and shaking their spears angrily. Unable to defend themselves, the ship's party began to sing and dance, which so amused the Aborigines they fell about laughing. So all ended well and in gratitude they named the spot Escape Cliffs.

Ebenezer, N.S.W.

Site of the oldest existing church in Australia and the first built by voluntary subscription. One of the settlers, Owen Cavanough, donated about 1.6 hectares of land in 1808. Rowland Hassall, pioneer clergyman (and founder of the first Sunday school in Australia), described the land as 'as most Beautyfull and centrycal spot which we have called Ebenezer Mount'.

Hobart, Tas.

Was named after Robert Hobart, fourth Earl of Buckinghamshire, who was Secretary of State for War and the Colonies during 1801-4. After Lieutenant-Governor David Collins used the name Hobart Town in his despatch of 24 April 1804, this term was used until an Act of the Tasmanian legislature restored the name Hobart in 1881.

Innamincka, S.A.

First called Hopetoun in honour of the Governor of Victoria. However, local pressure restored the Aboriginal name which is a corruption of an Aboriginal name meaning 'you go into the hole there'. This refers to a legend in which a totem-hero ordered a rainbow snake to go into a waterhole.

Kerang, Vic.

Said to be an Aboriginal name for the moon.

Narrogin, W.A.

Gets its name from an Aboriginal word meaning 'place of water'.

Nullarbor Plain, S.A. and W.A.

Named by Alfred Delisser who made the first important exploration inland in 1865-6. He took the name from the Latin *nulla* (no), *arbor* (tree).

Onkaparinga River, S.A.

Collet Barker discovered the river in 1831 and named it Ponkepurringa. In 1836 Lieutenant Field visited it and William Light (South Australian Surveyor-General) renamed it Field's River. Governor Gawler later asked that the Aboriginal name be restored, but it seems no one was sure of its spelling. Nganki-Parri was probably the correct name as it means 'woman's river'. Apparently when Murray River tribes raided the local ochre mines the Noarlunga Aborigines would hide their women in a place beside the river.

Pandora's Pass, N.S.W.

Allan Cunningham named this pass near Coolah in the Liverpool Range after Pandora in Greek mythology because of his difficulty in finding a way through the range.

Pieman River, Tas.

First named the Retreat River by Captain James Kelly in 1815, the river was renamed in 1824 when an escaped convict was captured near its mouth. This convict had once sold pastries and pies, so he was nicknamed 'Jimmy the Pieman'. It has been suggested that he was the notorious Alexander Pearce who killed and ate his companions during breaks from captivity.

Ruined Castle Valley, Qld

A valley and creek near the upper Dawson River which was named by Leichhardt in 1844. He described the fantastic sandstone of the area as being 'fissured and broken like pillars and walls and the high gates of the ruined castles of Germany'.

NOTES

Hey, that's a good idea! brings together, in one place, a wealth of information originally prepared by former PETA president, Pat Edwards, for earlier PETA publications, including the teachers' *Datebook/Diaries*—now, of course, out of print. In a convenient new format this information is now made freshly available to the thousands of teachers who have since become PETA members. This book will also be welcomed by those who had always hoped for just such a handy compilation. All teachers will find it an invaluable source of inspiration for those stimulating ideas which make the best classrooms such lively and interesting centres of learning. The numerous illustrations and decorations have been especially drawn for this new edition by Dorothy Dunphy.

The author

PAT EDWARDS is a primary trained teacher who specialised in Art. She also holds a Diploma in Speech and Drama. For some time she taught English at secondary level, moving back to the primary scene when she became principal of an independent girls' school.

She is now working full time as a freelance editor and writer. She acts as Consulting Editor for Ashton Scholastic's *Classroom* Magazine, providing its regular segment *High Days and Holidays*.

She has also written a number of P.E.N.'s and designed and illustrated three of PETA's classroom posters.

PETA, the Primary English Teaching Association, is an independent, non-profit organisation of teachers which has grown larger every year since its formation in 1972. Easy to join, PETA likes to believe that it offers members better value in publications than any other teaching body in Australia. Its publications try to keep the classroom teacher informed on the best ideas that bubble up not only in the Australian states but also in the United States, Canada and New Zealand. So many of PETA's past publications continue to sell because they are free of jargon, officialese and doublespeak. They are couched in clear and lively English—which is what PETA is all about! . . . For information about how to join and what is available, send a stamped addressed envelope to:

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